Buddha's Constant Companion

Venerable Ananda

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Contents

Introduction 6

Great Human Qualities Reflected In Ven. Ananda's Life 10

Venerable Ananda 12

Ven. Ananda And The Outcaste Maiden 15

Prince Ananda Becomes A Monk 33

Ven. Ananda Becomes A Stream-Winner 34

Ven. Ananda Becomes The Buddha's Chief Personal Attendant 36

Eight conditions Essential For The Buddha's Personal Attendant 39

Ven. Ananda Functions As The Buddha's Attendant 43

Ven. Ananda Becomes The Greatest In Five Areas 45

The Monk Who Had A Great Appeal To Ladies 48

The Two Chief Queens Of King Kosala Learn The Doctrine From Ven. Ananda 49

Ladies Of The Harem Of King Udeni Request Ven. Ananda To Preach To Them 51

Ven. Ananda Preaches To The Queens In The Harem 53

Ladies Of The Harem Get Sons Who Resemble Ven. Ananda 54

A Bhikkhuni Resents Ven. Maha Kassapa Advising Ven. Ananda 59

Nuns Care More For Ven. Maha Kassapa Than For Ven. Maha Kassapa 62

Ven. Ananda's Mishap At The Palace 64

Ven. Ananda Distributes Rice Cakes To Beggars 65

Vishakha Forgets Her Headgear: Ven. Ananda Keeps It Safe 66

Vishakha Auctions The Ornament Touched By Ven. Ananda 68

Ven. Ananda Consoles A Crying Maiden 70

A Queen Fights For Women's Liberation 71

The Second Revolution At The Palace 73

A Bhikkhuni Pretends To Be Ill To Entice Ven. Ananda 78

Ven. Ananda And Women 79

The Buddha's Attitude To Women 83

Ven. Ananda Ordains Two Orphans 86

The Buddha Refuses Cloths Offered By Mahā Pajapati: Ananda Intervenes 87

Ven. Ananda Requests The Buddha To Preach The Disciplinary Rules To The Monks 91

The Buddha Chases Out A Group Of Noisy Monks 93

The Buddha Refuses To Accept The Medicinal Broth Prepared By Ven. Ananda 95

Ven. Ananda Chants Protective Chants To Quell The Three-Fold Menaces Affecting The City Of Vesali 96

Ven. Ananda Gets Water From A Covered Well 98

Ven. Ananda Prevents Questioning Of The Buddha When The Buddha Was Ailing 99

Ven. Ananda Preaches The Doctrine On Behalf Of The Buddha 100

Ven. Ananda Preaches The Doctrine On Behalf Of The Buddha 101

King Kosala Praises Ven. Ananda 102

The Buddha Attends A Sick Monk With Ven. Ananda 105
Preparing Robes Under The Instructions Of The Buddha 107
The Buddha Shows A Serpent To Ven. Ananda 108
Ven. Ananda Advises Ven. Vangisa 111
Ven. Ananda Helps A Brahmin 112
Ven. Ananda Ordains A Beggar 113
The Buddha Along With Ven. Ananda Helps Ven. Anuruddha To Prepare His Robe 116
Ananda Bodhi 117
Ven. Ananda Requests The Buddha To Go To Another Village Because The People Are Abusive 121
Ven. Ananda Is Saddened That The Buddha Has Grown Old . 122
Ven. Ananda Says Dependent Origination Is Quite Easy 123
The Buddha Teaches 'Object Meditation' to Ven. Ananda 124
Ven. Ananda And Ven. Kassapa 126
Five Lay Disciples Listen To A Sermon While Ven. Ananda Fans The Buddha 127
Dialogue Between The Buddha And Ven. Ananda 131
The Buddha Questions Ven. Ananda 136
The Buddha Passes Away 142
Ven. Ananda Wails 145
Ven. Ananda Attains Sainthood 150
Ven. Ananda And Ven. Maha Kassapa 154
Elders Blame Ven. Ananda 155
Ven. Ananda And Ven. Sariputta 157
The Demise Of Ven. Ananda 159
Ven. Ananda's Past Birth 161

Introduction

Two immortal personalities dominate the totality of the Buddha's transcendental Dispensation. They are the Supremely Enlightened Buddha Himself – the sole source and fountain of the Buddhist system of thought – and Ven. Ananda – the timeless repository of the Doctrine expounded by the Supreme Buddha. To my mind there is hardly any other instance in the whole of human history (either in the field of worldly activities or in the pursuits of spiritual quests) of such long and dedicated loyalty of one individual to another, to match the epic adherence of Ven. Ananda to his Master – the Supreme Buddha.

In his character and outlook, Ven. Ananda was touchingly and movingly human. His personality held a special appeal to womenfolk. This was partly because of his simple, charming behaviour, and his ever-present readiness to help anyone who was in distress or difficulty. His unprecedented orientation towards service was not at all motivated by personal or selfish urges. In spite of his unceasing preoccupation with the administrative and organizational matters he invariably had to deal with, in terms of his position as the Chief Attendant of the Supremely Enlightened Buddha, Ven. Ananda displayed a deep intellectuality and a profound grasp of abstruse philosophic concepts.

Ven. Ananda liaised between the Buddha and numerous persons – ranging from ordinary folks to powerful kings – who were keen to meet the Enlightened One. Since Ven. Ananda attained the higher fruits of spiritual achievement fairly late in his religious life, his association with the Buddha was marked by a pronounced streak of personal attachment. When he read those tell-tale signs of age encroaching upon the body of the Buddha, he was sorely aggrieved. The plight of the delicate Sakyan ladies who had trekked harrowing miles in search of ordination, moved Ven. Ananda nearly to tears.

In the middle of the night Ven. Ananda would walk right around the Buddha's Fragrant Chamber to ensure his Master's undisturbed rest. It was his single-minded, unswerving dedication to the well-being of the Buddha that slackened his efforts to pursue personal spiritual liberation.

The undiminishing fascination and the vividness of Ven. Ananda's life story derive from the remarkable synthesis between the two unlikely qualities of intense humanity on the one hand, and penetrating spiritual insight on the other.

Mankind is endlessly and perpetually indebted to Ven. Ananda's prodigious memory, which enabled him to store in his mind the formal Discourses of the Buddha delivered in Ven. Ananda's presence or later recounted to him when delivered in his absence. Over and above these, Ven. Ananda's memory was filled with incidents in which the Buddha figured in a variety of contexts. Viewed this way, the life story of Ven.

Ananda is intricately intertwined with the life story of the Buddha Himself.

The above are some of the factors that motivated us to publish the life story of Ven. Ananda during the first Vesak festival of the 2000s. We have already presented to the world the life story of the Buddha under the title "The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived – The Supreme Buddha". Therefore, it is quite logical to present the life story of Ven. Ananda as his is the most significant presence in the Buddha's Dispensation, next to the Supremely Enlightened One.

The present work is replete with dramatic events that are both spiritual and temporal. All these ingredients contribute cumulatively to elevate the life story of Ven. Ananda to the level of a pre-eminent biography in the whole history of mankind.

In the progressively evolving publications programme of The Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre we have now moved well beyond our 220th publication. To make all this headway, not only in terms of quantity but in terms of the centrally important matter of quality as well, I have been blessed with the continuing assistance of a dedicated and loyal publications team. I consider it my special duty to extend my gratitude to all those who have provided unfailing support to me, ensuring the success of our publications programme.

I consider it nothing but proper to single out a handful of these supporters for special mention. I must record here my

grateful thanks to Mr. Edwin Ariyadasa, media specialist from Sri Lanka, who functions as the Editor-in-Chief of The Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre. I am thankful to designer, graphics expert and illustrator Piyaratne Hewabattage, and artist-illustrator P. Wickremanayake for their contribution towards the success of the SBMC publications programme.

To all those who contributed towards the fulfillment of this Dhamma project, I wish happiness, good health and prosperity.

With Metta,

Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero
Chief Monk / Chief Administrator
Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre
18.05.2000

"The Gift of Truth Excels All Other Gifts"

Sabba Dānaṃ Dhamma Dānaṃ Jināti

Chapter One

Great Human Qualities Reflected In Venerable Ananda's Life

1. Unswerving, upright, incomparable loyalty to the Master.
2. Receiving a position with due honour.
3. Awaiting the conferring of a position on qualifications alone, without entering into an unseemly fray.
4. Safeguarding to the utmost the honour of the given office.
5. Performing the duties of the office to the letter.
6. Non-acceptance of the profits and privileges the office entailed.
7. Not becoming unduly proud because of the high office.
8. Exercising total restraint to see that the office was not used, in whatever manner, as a weapon to harm others.
9. Performing the duties of the office, not as mere routine but totally as a service.
10. Never arrogating to himself the powers and the greatness of his Master – in other words, never misusing the privileges of his office.
11. Being ever-ready to sacrifice his own life for his Master.
12. Never being disobedient to his Master in any matter; never doing anything to hurt his Master's feelings, even slightly.

13. Remaining above the slanders of others.
14. Never making a visitor to his Master feel disappointed, whether the visitor was important or not. Never hurting the feelings of such visitors.
15. Making visitors feel happy to see and talk to the companion of the Master.
16. Behaving in such a way that the visitors would be happy with the Master merely by meeting the companion.
17. Never allowing sensual desires to enter his mind during the whole of the 25 years he served the Master.
18. Perpetually emulating the life of the Master (the Supreme Buddha).
19. Disregarding privations, suffering and exhaustion while serving the Master.
20. Bearing firmly in mind the Word of the Buddha, and revealing it to the world at the First Council, for the benefit of mankind.
21. Total disregard of such divisions as race, clan and caste.
22. Helping women, who were considered the weaker sex by contemporary society, to gain their liberty.
23. Although he was most popular among ladies, never entertaining unseemly thoughts about any woman.
24. Possessing a noble name that could be recalled with honour and deference even after 2,500 years, and whose high qualities could be adored, and whose life could set an example to the future brotherhood of the Sangha.

25. Possessing the great good fortune and the unparalleled privilege of being able to associate with the greatest human being in the whole of mankind worthy of associating with.

> *"Buddha Dharma is like a bridge well built of flexible steel, it gives a little to wind and water, it adapts itself to changing circumstances, but at the same time it has secure foundations and offers a safe way to the Deathless, to Nirvana."*
>
> *Phra Khantipalo, "Tolerance"*

Chapter Two

Venerable Ananda

When we consider the exceptionally noble traits of some great men in human history, the quality of his loyalty to his master is alone sufficient to recall with honour and deference, after more than 2,500 years, the name of Ven. Ananda, the Chief Attendant of the Supreme Buddha.

The unswerving devotion, the sincere respect and the genuine affection Ven. Ananda displayed towards the Supreme Buddha,

as an attendant, as a protector, as His faithful private secretary, His assistant, and as His companion, can never be forgotten as long as human society lasts. Ven. Ananda is the best ever answer to such questions as how one should serve a master, how one should care for a master, and how one should win the favour of a master.

Many are the lessons that could be learnt from the Supreme Buddha and Ven. Ananda by those servants devoid of affection towards their masters, and by those masters who are devoid of affection towards their servants.

When we consider the Supreme Buddha as a Master, as a Chief, as a Leader, and as an Administrator, it can be decidedly stated that a greater master, a greater chief, a greater leader, and a greater administrator than the Supreme Buddha has not so far been born among men.

The astounding affection Ven. Ananda had towards the Supreme Buddha, his Master, establishes what a noble and exceptional person the Buddha was, and equally, what a noble and exceptional person Ven. Ananda was.

The gradual waning of the initial affection and deference towards a master or a leader, after keeping company with them closely, is a common occurrence. But, the devotion and deference Ven. Ananda entertained towards the Buddha, while associating with Him closely for 25 years, continued to grow and flourish, and did not wane at all. This way, the only exceptional and noble human being who had the rare privilege and the good fortune to associate with the greatest and the noblest of human beings, was Ven. Ananda.

In the recorded history of officials who distinguished themselves by guarding to the fullest their own honour and the honour of their office after being appointed to high office, Ven. Ananda is, without any doubt, one of the greatest.

In the Buddha's days, Ven. Ananda was the most popular of all the disciples of the Supreme Buddha. In popular adoration and physical comeliness, he was second only to the Supreme Buddha. He had inherited, by birth, a royal delicacy. His body gleamed with a golden hue. **Āyasmā kira Ānando samanta pāsādiko. Abhi rūpo. Dassanīyo. Bahusāsiko. Sangha sobhano**.

(Manorathapūrani – Catuttha Nipāta)

"Ven. Ananda is handsome on all accounts. He is exceedingly attractive. He is pleasant to look at. He is erudite. He is an adornment to the Sangha Brotherhood."

Ven. Ananda, sobbing in grief like an infant at the Great Demise of the 80-year-old Buddha, is an episode that moves the devoted readers who peruse not only the Life of the Buddha, but the Life of Ven. Ananda, as well. This sorrow is widely known among Buddhists, just as Ven. Ananda himself is.

Ven. Ananda is one of the exceptionally great human beings who adorned human history and humanity with the variegated, fragrant blossoms of their virtues. From hereon is indicated how Ven. Ananda is reflected in the Buddhist Scripture, in other words, in the **Tipitaka** (The Three Baskets).

Chapter Three

Venerable Ananda And The Outcaste Maiden

One day, Ven. Ananda returned to the monastery from his alms-round. He took his meal and stepped out with the empty bowl to fetch some water. Ven. Ananda saw a young maiden obtaining water from a well near the road. He walked towards her and stood beside her with the empty bowl in hand, looking down.

Prakirti (the maiden): What do you need, Ven. Sir?

Ven. **Ananda**: Could I have some water, please?

Prakirti: I am an outcaste girl.

Ven. Ananda: I need only some water.

Prakirti: I am an outcaste girl. No one drinks our water.

Ven. **Ananda**: I only need some water to quench my thirst. Water quenches everybody's thirst, with no thought of caste differences.

Prakirti: I am a low caste girl. Although water in our well is pure, to those of high caste our water is impure. No one, other than those of our caste, has drunk water from this well.

Ven. **Ananda**: I never asked you what your caste is. I only need some water.

Prakirti: But, don't you know this much, Ven. Sir? In this country there are two castes – high caste and low caste. I am of low caste.

Ven. **Ananda**: I am just not interested in your caste. I only need some water.

Prakirti: How can I give you water: I am an outcaste girl. Those who live in the palatial buildings over there belong to high caste. We are not permitted even to see them. They do not even tread upon our shadows. When we approach they hide to avoid us. If they see us they wash their faces with scented water, saying, "I have seen an outcaste." With that, how can I give you water? How can I get near you to give you water? If my shadow falls on you, you yourself will have to become an outcaste.

Ven. **Ananda**: I am not aware of castes. I only know that you too are a human being as much as I am. I have never heard that caste can make any difference between one person and another. I do not accept that idea. All beings of the human kind I have seen so far have two hands, two feet, two eyes, one mouth, one face, one nose each. Does the sun rise from the West for people of low caste? Do they experience happiness and pain differently? Don't their stomachs get filled when they eat? How are they different?

Prakirti: There is not much of a difference in appearance. But those in high caste achieved that status due to their merit. We committed sin: that is why we were born in a low caste. They are born from the mouth of

Maha Brahma. But we are born from the sole of Maha Brahma. We are not permitted to study the sacred Vedas. Therefore, we are lowly in every way. We are outcastes.

Ven. **Ananda**: But that is not how I have learnt from our Teacher. Listen to this Stanza:

"**Na jaccā vasalo hoti – Na jaccā hoti brāhmano**
Kammanā vasalo hoti – Kammanā hoti Brāhmano."

"No one becomes an outcaste (Vasala) by birth. No one becomes a brahmin by birth."

Therefore, I am not interested in your being an outcaste. Please give me some water.

The maid looks around in fear and shame. Trembling with fear and shame she bends down, brings her pot near the bowl and pours a bowlful of water. Ven. Ananda blesses her and takes away the water. The maid keeps on looking at the receding figure of Ven. Ananda.

While looking at him she thinks this way, "Please give me some water! Give me some water! Give me some water!" What sweet words are these! What calm words are these! What a comely body! Aren't there any other wells in Savatthi? Is there water only in this well? Why did this person come just to me for water? Am I the only young woman in Savatthi? Did he want water from me without being aware that I am an outcaste girl? He was quite aware. Even a child would know that we are outcastes by our dress. Who is that handsome man? From where did he come? I will thank god if he comes back for water. I learnt that I am a human girl only because of him.

Until now I thought of myself as an animal-girl. What an attractive face! Eyes overflowing with kindness! Handsome, young and golden figure! How can I see him again? How can I listen to that sweet voice again? Life is useless without seeing him. How good if I can give him water every day. If I can keep on talking to him every day. If he comes again I will not let him go back. I will take him home and keep him there. If I can keep on gazing at him I will not want food or drink. 'Give me some water! Give me some water!' These words are indelibly etched in my heart."

Outcaste mother: Prakirti! Prakirti! Where has she gone to? What on earth has happened to her? Has she got rooted by the side of the well when she went there to fetch water? This is the sort of thing that invariably happens when she goes to the well. She starts gossiping with the girls from the neighbourhood. Prakirti! Prakirti!

Prakirti: Mother, I am here!

Mother: Where?

Prakirti: Here, by the well.

Mother: It is midday. One cannot even step on the earth, it is so hot. All the other girls who came to the well are gone. What are you doing by the well, all alone?

Prakirti: Mother, such a sweet voice, "Please give me some water!"

Mother: "Please give me water!"? Who asked you for water?

Prakirti: An extremely handsome young man. His head was shaven, he wore yellow clothes and he had an alms-bowl in hand. A young man of tranquil appearance.

Mother: How can a young man be handsome if he has shaven his head? Don't you know that they shave heads to take away the handsomeness?

Prakirti: I do not know that. But to me he was extremely handsome. His body gleams with a golden hue. His looks are subdued. He is simple. To me, he looked like an embodiment of kindness and simplicity.

Mother: Is he of our caste?

Prakirti: Yes. He said that he is of the same caste as I am.

Mother: What's that caste?

Prakirti: Human caste.

Mother: You must have concealed your caste when he spoke to you. Most outcastes in this country do not like to reveal their caste. That is a demeaning attitude. If all are proud of their castes, the lowly caste will disappear. Didn't you tell him that you are an outcaste maiden?

Prakirti: I told him that I am an outcaste. But he never accepted that. He repeatedly asked me for water. He said that, according to what he has learnt, one becomes either a Brahmin or an outcaste not by birth, but by deed.

Mother: What else did he say?

Prakirti: He said, do not betray the freedom you have as a human being. Demeaning one's self by one's own self, considering one's self to be lowly and helpless, insulting one's own self, are worse than killing one's self. Lack of self-respect is a lowlier act than self-destruction, he said. Everyone is born to this world as a free human being. He said that after one is born that way, human freedom is restricted by such shackles as race, caste, religion, language, customs, parents, teachers, priests and tradition. All this time I thought of myself as a low person goaded by social customs and manners. I had thought of myself until now as a stray dog rummaging the garbage dumps of the street for morsels of food. He showed me the light. I feel as if I have got a new life. It is only today that I learnt that I am a new member of the human society. He is a light to me. He is my light. "Give me some water! Give me some water!" What sweet words!

Mother: Although he does not know about outcastes I know them. People are born because of their **kamma**.

Prakirti: What have those in the high castes done to be born in that way?

Mother: That, too, is the result of their **kamma**.

Prakirti: Whatever that may be, the person who asked me for water told me that a person does not become either high-caste or outcaste by birth. He said that even if a king, a Brahmin, a minister or a guild-leader were to take life, were to steal, were to misbehave sexually, were

to utter falsehoods, or were to take intoxicating drinks, he is an outcaste.

Mother: That is exactly what I described as the result of *kamma*.

Prakirti: Mother, everything does not happen according to *kamma*. We have been made outcastes not by **kamma**, but by society. I do not want all that nonsense. What is the name of that young man who asked me for water – that is what I want to know. What does he do? Those are the things I want to know.

Mother: I made enquiries. His name is Ananda. He is a disciple of the Buddha. He is of the Sakya clan.

Prakirti: What does he do?

Mother: He is a monk who has given up lay-life and has become a Bhikkhu.

Prakirti: O mother! He is an extremely good man. It does not matter to me whoever he is. I want to keep on looking at him. I just cannot live without him. I need Ananda somehow. If I do not get him I will fast unto death. Mother, practise all the black-magic you know and bring him to me. If not, please understand that you will never see your only daughter again. I will not take food until Ananda is brought to me.

Mother: Our King – King Kosala – is the chief devotee of Ascetic Gotama. The King visits Ascetic Gotama every day. If they come to know that you love Ven. Ananda they

will set fire to the whole of our outcaste settlement. They will not allow not only us, but any of our caste, to live here. You are trying to destroy all of us!

Prakirti: If that is so, chant the mantra (mystic chant) you know. That will bring Ananda here. If I do not get him that will be my end.

Mother: The Buddha is a passionless person. He knows the Buddha mantra. All the other mantras are subdued by that. Whatever that is I will chant my mantra.

The outcaste mother prepares the centre of her compound applying cow-dung. She places grass on that spot and kindles a fire. She places logs in the fire, and throws the flowers one by one into the fire, chanting her mantra:

> *"Amale, vimale, kunkume sumane, yena baddhasi vidyut icchaya devo varsati, vidyotati garjati, vismayan. Maharajasya, samabhi vardhayitum, devebhyo manushyebhyo gandharvebhyah shikigraha deva, visikhigraha grahadeva, Anandasyagamanaya, Samgamanaya, kramanaya, grahanaya juho svaha."*

When the outcaste mother kept on chanting this mantra the mind of Ven. Ananda, residing at the monastery, became confused. Ven. Ananda left the monastery and walked to the settlement of the outcastes. The outcaste mother saw Ven. Ananda approaching in the distance and asked her daughter to prepare a bed in the room. Prakirti was overwhelmed with joy. She dressed up and made a bed. Ven. Ananda came to the house of the outcastes and stood there silently. Ven. Ananda,

seeing the coquetry of the outcaste maiden Prakirti and the guiles of her mother, realized that he was in difficulty. He thought of the Buddha and asked for His help. The Buddha, seeing in His divine eye that Ven. Ananda was in difficulties, chanted the Buddha mantra this way:

> *"Sthi racyutith sunitih svastih sarva pranibhyah sarah prasannam nirdosham prashantam sarvatobhayam itayo yatra shamyanti sarva siddhasca yoninani etena satya vakyena svastyanandaya bhiksave."*

With the power of this Buddha mantra, the potency of the outcaste mother's mantra was weakened. Immediately, Ven. Ananda regained his senses and returned to Jetavanarama. Seeing this, Prakirti told her mother that Ven. Ananda went back. Her mother stopped chanting and told her daughter that the mantra of Ascetic Gotama was more powerful than all the mantras in the world. She told her daughter that he would undoubtedly have chanted the Buddha mantra.

Ven. Ananda, who returned to the monastery escaping the spell cast by the outcastes, worshipped the Buddha and stood there respectfully. The Buddha addressed Ven. Ananda and said thus: "Ananda, you must listen to **sadaksara vidyā** (The Magic of Six Letters) and memorize it. This will benefit you, monks, nuns, and male and female lay-devotees. This **sadaksara vidyā** has been preached by six Buddhas. This has been preached by the Four Guardian Gods, by the Chief of Gods, Sahampati Maha Brahma, and by me the Sakya Sage (Sakyamuni). Ananda, you too must memorize it, and meditate upon it. This is how it goes:

"Andare pandare karande keyurerci haste svara grive Bandhumati, viramati, dhara vidha cilimile, vilodaya, visani loke visa cala cala golamati gandavile cili mile satimimena yatha samvibhaketa golamati ganda vilayai svaha."

"Ananda, if someone chants this **sadaksari vidyā** he will become free if he is being tortured. He will be free from punishment if he is ordered to be punished. If he is frightened he will be free from fright. Ananda, a person who has been protected by this chant cannot be overwhelmed by any action other than the result of a previous kamma."

Ven. Ananda escaped the spell cast by the outcaste mother. But Prakirti, the outcaste maiden, did not stop loving Ven. Ananda. One day, when Ven. Ananda was on his alms-round. Prakirti started following him. Thoroughly ashamed, Ven. Ananda stopped his alms-round quickly and went back to the monastery. There, he informed the Enlightened One about this development. The outcaste girl followed Ven. Ananda to the monastery and lingered at the gate. The Buddha sent word and asked her to come in.

The Buddha: Is it true that you keep following Ananda?

Prakirti: Yes, Sir. I follow him.

The Buddha: Why?

Prakirti: To make Ananda my husband.

The Buddha: Do your parents approve?

Prakirti: They approve.

The Buddha: That's not enough. Bring your parents here.

Prakirti rushed home and brought back her parents, saying that the Buddha wanted to see them.

The Buddha: Your daughter says that she wants Ananda. Do you approve that?

Parents: Yes, Sir. We approve it. Our daughter says she cannot live without Ananda. She says she will kill herself if she cannot have him.

The Buddha: All right. The two of you can go now, leaving Prakirti here.

Prakirti's parents worshipped the Buddha, and left.

The Buddha: In the city of Savatthi there are all the young men one wants. Why do you love only Ananda?

Prakirti: I like him very much. I love him a lot. My mind got illuminated because of him. I learned to think freely because of him. It was he who made me understand that I am a being belonging to the human-kind. It was he who convinced me that I, too, am entitled to all the privileges, all the rights, and all the freedom that a human being should have. He is the only person who taught me when I had been discarded to the garbage heap, to the corner and to the edge of society, beaten with the goad of caste, like a stray dog, that I too belong in the human race. Therefore, he is my light. He is my new life. I just cannot live without him. The sight of him is a treat to my eyes. His sweet voice is delightful to my ears. His subdued way

of looking at me, and his compassionate words are deeply etched in my heart. I must have him.

The Buddha: All right. I will give you Ananda. But you must do what I ask you to do.

Prakirti: I will do whatever you ask me, if you give me Ananda.

The Buddha: If you need Ananda, you too must wear what he does. Ananda's head is shaven. You must have your head shaven. Ananda is clad in yellow robes. You too must be clad in yellow robes. If you do these things you will be able to get Ananda.

Prakirti: All right, I will go home and come back just as you ask.

Prakirti rushes home and tells her mother the whole story. The mother blames her. Prakirti cries. She stops taking her food.

Mother: My daughter, have you gone mad? Are you trying to fast unto death?

Prakirti: O my dear mother! Please shave my head. If you do not, I will die.

Mother: You foolish girl, don't you know that a woman's greatest beauty feature is her hair? How ugly does a woman become when her hair is shaven! Are you blind? Is there anything else that will make a woman ugly? When your comely head of hair is cut off, and when

your head is shaven, how ugly you will become! There is hardly any other maiden as beautiful as you in the whole city of Savatthi. I will find you a good noble youth. Don't be in a hurry. Be patient for a little while. Besides, what is beautiful in a woman whose head is devoid of hair? Don't be mad!

Prakirti: I do not need any other person. I want only Ananda. To me he is very handsome. His face gleams like gold. I like very much the way he looks, his sweet voice, his subdued gait. I do not want any other person on earth, but him.

Mother: All right. Now, eat your food!

Prakirti: I will not eat until my head is shaven.

Prakirti refuses to eat for several days. Her mother is frightened lest she will starve to death. At last, her mother shaves her head.

Mother: Now you look like a nun. You will invariably get deceived by those monks. This is a trick of Ananda's Teacher. No one lured by Him comes back home. He has powers of hypnotism.

Prakirti: It does not matter. I do not mind anything as long as I get Ananda. It does not matter to me if I have to beg in the street with him. Mother, I am going to Jetavana Monastery.

Mother: All right, you go along – but, just see what is going to happen to you.

Prakirti: It does not really matter what happens to me as long as I get Ananda.

Shaven-head Prakirti goes to Jetavana Monastery clad in yellow robes. She worshipped the Buddha and stood to one side. Hundreds of monks, including Ven. Ananda, are seated around the Buddha.

Prakirti: O Blessed One! I acted exactly as you instructed. Now, please give Ananda to me.

The Buddha: Yes, you are now fit to receive Ananda. Before I give him to you, I have to put some questions to you.

Prakirti: Please go ahead.

The Buddha: What feature of Ananda do you love? His appearance? His face? His eyes? His way of speaking? His gait – what?

Prakirti: To me, Ananda's face is comely. His nose is beautiful. His eyes are lovely. His ears are attractive. His voice is very sweet. His ideas are quite just. His total appearance is quite alluring. This way, I love all his features.

The Buddha: You consider Ananda's body to be beautiful. But, if his skin is bruised he bleeds. If it is not treated it gets swollen. It begins to ache. Pus will ooze out. What you describe as beautiful is the complexion you see, which is limited to the skin on the surface. This way, beauty or attractiveness is only the view of various people about the appearance of an individual's skin. If

we were to strip off the skin of any individual, no one would even want to look at that person. If what is inside the body is turned outside, one would have to take a cudgel to prevent the dogs and crows from attacking. This body is not made of pearls or gold or silver – nor of gems or corals. It is made up of bones, skin, veins, flesh, blood, spittle, excrement, etc. The body is worthless the moment you look at it. When you consider its nature it is repulsive. People who are not wise think of it as "good". It is as impermanent as froth and bubble, as temporary as a flash of lightning, as illusory as magic, or as a figure seen in a dream. The body is ephemeral, uncertain, false. It is like a vessel full of waste-matter. The body is like a disease. One becomes one's own enemy. If a person were to forgo meals for one day, if one were not to bathe for one day, if one were not to brush one's teeth for one day, one would tend to find one's own self repulsive. All forms of repulsive things ooze out of the body. The body is a repository of diseases, of sorrows, of fears, of disasters. There is no knowing whether one will die today or tomorrow. One's own bodily waste is repulsive to one's own self. The body is the store-house of repulsiveness. One cannot take along this body. It cannot be given to anyone. One cannot even think about it. The skeleton has 300 bones, not to mention the teeth. These bones are joined together in 180 places. The body is bound together with 900 veins. Nine-hundred lumps of flesh have been pasted on to it. The total skeleton is covered up with a skin so that what is inside cannot be seen. That skin is polished with a slightly gleaming

tissue. This body has millions of minute pores. Waste matter oozes out of this body like fat from a grease-pot. It is the dwelling place of millions of worms. It is a place where weeping, mourning and lamentation take shelter. It is like a vessel of waste matter with nine openings – unclean sweat and perspiration ooze out of 99 pores.

Once the life-breath leaves this body, people are frightened even to touch it. In a couple of days it becomes a putrid dead body with waste matter oozing out of it. There is only very little difference between love of one dead body and the love of another dead body. Love springs entirely because of craving. Where there is no craving there is no affection. Where there is affection there is sorrow, too. From the day you started loving Ananda until now, you experienced sorrow, weeping, lamentation, agony, sleeplessness, starving, exhaustion, emaciation and fatigue. None of this is happiness. You must consider now, with your wisdom, whether Ananda's body is an entity that should be loved.

Prakirti: O my Enlightened One, I acquired a sense of reality from your Sermon. I understood the reality of the body from what you preached. My mind experienced a great sense of relief from what you said. I understood clearly all the things you said.

The Buddha: Is that right? If that is so I will fulfil my promise to give you Ananda. You can now go with Ananda.

Prakirti: O Enlightened One, I do not need Ven. Ananda now. Your Words cured me of my mental derangement –

my madness. I am not a woman who will stoop to that kind of folly now. All such defilements as passion have now left my mind. Please take pity on me and allow me to enter the order of nuns.

The Buddha: Yes, my Dispensation is like a great ocean. The waters of such rivers as the Ganga, Yamuna, Aciravati, Sindhu and Godhavari, all flow into the ocean and merge their separate names in the one name of ocean. In the same way, people of various levels from various races, castes, lands, enter my Dispensation. When they enter my Dispensation all those previous differences disappear and they begin to live together like the children of one father, assuming the name "The Brotherhood", belonging to one family. All those become Buddha Putras (the Children of the Buddha) and Sakya Putra (the Children of Sakya Sage). Therefore, there is no obstacle to your entering the Bhikkhuni (Nun) Order.

Prakirti entered the Bhikkhuni Order and became an Arahant.

The news that the Buddha ordained an outcaste girl spread throughout the city by word of mouth. Those of the warrior clan, Brahmins, householders and aristocrats of the city of Savatthi were shaken. They kept on asking how an outcaste woman, when she became a nun, could enter the houses of the high-born, how can the high-born approach her and how can she receive alms from the high-born.

They informed King Kosala of this development. At this, King Kosala and members of the high-born families of Savatthi saw

the Buddha and discussed this issue with Him. The Buddha called Bhikkhuni Prakirti, Ven. Ananda and the disciples and, in their presence and in the presence of King Kosala and the aristocrats, asked whether they would like to know the story of Prakirti's past birth. As they all wanted to know it the Buddha revealed her past birth to them this way:

In the past, on the banks of the Ganga, there was an outcaste chief called Trishanka. He had a comely son named Shardula Karna who was deeply learned in the Three Vedas. When it was the ripe age for him to marry, his father discussed with a learned Brahmin called Pushkaar Shari about giving his daughter in marriage to his son. This daughter was called Prakirti. The Brahmin resented this proposal very much and refused to give his daughter in marriage to the outcaste leader's son.

The outcaste leader tried to demonstrate the evil of observing caste differences. He pointed out that whatever the differences, humans are of the same race. The Brahmin Pushkari Shari was quite pleased at the discourse of the outcaste leader Trishanka, and at last consented to give his daughter Prakirti in marriage to the outcaste leader's son.

The beautiful daughter Prakirti of the high-born Brahmin Pushkari Shari is this Bhikkhuni Prakirti who is here now. The son of the outcaste leader is Ven. Ananda. I, the Buddha, am the outcaste leader Trishanka of that time. The assembled leaders were amazed by the story. King Kosala and others worshipped the Buddha and left.

(Divyāvadāna – Shiārdūla karnāvadāna)

Chapter Four

Prince Ananda Becomes A Monk

On Friday, the Vesak full-moon day of the year **2478 in the Kali Era** – that is, exactly on the day Aspirant Buddha Prince Siddhartha was born – the Chief Queen of King Amitodana, brother of king Suddhodana, gave birth to a fortunate Prince. He was named Ananda because his birth gave happiness to all his relatives.

Prince Ananda grew up amidst near divine luxury, and came of age. At that time the Aspirant Buddha, after His Great Renunciation, had attained Supreme Buddhahood. After His first visit to Kapilavatthu, during which He extended spiritual assistance to His kinsmen, He left Kapilavatthu and arrived at Anupiya Mango Grove of the Malla Kings.

On the day Prince Siddhartha displayed his prowess his clansmen, numbering about 80,000, pledged that Prince Siddhartha should have a retinue of the Warrior Clan, whether he became Universal Monarch or Supreme Buddha. After he realized Buddhahood many of those Warrior Princes did not become monks. At this the great King Suddhodana assembled the royal Princes once more, and said: "If my son remained a householder he would have become a Universal Monarch. Then you would have become his retinue. But now he is the Supreme Buddha, He must have the same retinue as the Buddha as he would have had if he had become Universal Monarch. Therefore, your families must give a prince each."

When this was said, about 1,000 princes from well-known families became monks. From some families none became monks. When the rumour spread that the families who did not have monks were not kinsmen of the Buddha, those families too agreed to send a prince, each to become monks.

Under those circumstances, this Prince Ananda, along with the five Warrior Princes **Bhaddiya**, **Anuruddha**, **Bhagu**, **Kimbila and Devadatta**, and the valet **Upāli**, went over to Anupiya Mango Grove, and became monks. When Prince Ananda was ordained, Elder **Bellaṭṭhi Sīsa** became his mentor. Elder Mantāniputta Punna, son of the Brahmin lady **Mantāni**, became his teacher. Soon after Ven. Ananda was ordained he achieved Stream-Winner status by listening to a sermon by his teacher, Elder **Puṇṇa**.

Sāvaka Carita

Chapter Five

Venerable Ananda Becomes A Stream-Winner

When Ven. Ananda was a novice his teacher, Elder **Mantāniputta Puṇṇa** preached him a sermon. Listening to his sermon Ven. Ananda attained the status of Stream-Winner (**Sotāpatti**). Ven. **Puṇṇa** addressed Ven. Ananda: "O Ananda, what brings about the egotism to say, 'I am'?" Ven. Ananda replied: "The egotism 'I am' occurs due to corporeality (**rūpa**). It also occurs due to sensation (**vedanā**), perception (**saññā**), formation (**sankhāra**), and due to consciousness (**viṇṇāna**).

Elder **Puṇṇa**, continuing to preach to Ven. Ananda, said: "O Ananda, a well-dressed man or woman, a young man or young woman, views his or her reflection in the mirror. This viewing is done due to corporeality (**rūpa**). Therefore, the pride, the egotism 'I am' occurs due to corporeality (**rūpa**). Similarly, the pride, egotism 'I am' can occur due to sensation (**vedanā**), perception (**saññā**) formation (**sankhāra**), and due to consciousness (**viṇṇāna**). O Ananda, is corporeality (**rūpa**) permanent or impermanent?"

Ven. **Ananda**: Impermanent.

Ven. **Puṇṇa**: If an entity is impermanent is it pleasant or unpleasant?

Ven. **Ananda**: If something is impermanent, subject to change, if it is sorrow-fraught, is it proper and good to think 'This is mine.' 'This is I.' and "This is my soul.'?

Ven. **Puṇṇa**: It is not proper and good to think like that.

Ven. **Ananda**: Are sensations (**vedanā**), perceptions (**saññā**), formations (**sankhāra**), and consciousness (**viṇṇāna**) permanent or impermanent?

Ven. **Puṇṇa**: Impermanent.

Ven. **Ananda**: If something is impermanent it is sorrow-fraught. If something is impermanent, sorrow-fraught, subject to change, is it proper to think of such a thing as 'I' or 'mine'?

Ven. **Puṇṇa**: Not proper.

Ven. **Ananda**: In that case if you see a form, either yours or someone else's, either young or beautiful or otherwise, you must view these with a sense of reality and wisdom, and must consider that they are not mine, not permanent and are subject to change. Then you become disillusioned with the Five Aggregates – namely, corporeality (**rūpa**), sensation (**vedanā**), perception (**saññā**), formations (**sankhāra**), and consciousness (**viṇṇāna**). Once you are disillusioned you will not cling to them. When you are liberated true wisdom dawns. You achieve realization.

Listening to this discourse by Elder Mattaniputta Punna, Ven. Ananda achieved the status of Stream-Winner.

(Saṃyutta Nikāya – Khandha Saṃyutta – Thera Vagga)

Chapter Six

Venerable Ananda Becomes The Buddha's Chief Personal Attendant

The Enlightened One was a great ascetic who discarded the life of luxury, royal lifestyle and busy public life because of his own personal experience of them. However that may be, since his glory spread throughout the length and breadth of the country with the speed of wind, the number of persons who wanted to see Him, who desired to talk to Him, who were keen to find solutions to profound problems and to listen

to His sermons, began to increase rapidly. Some travelled hundreds and thousands of miles to see Him. There were visitors from many countries and distant kingdoms.

The Enlightened One delighted in solitude. He had realized its value through His personal experience. But, wherever He went, crowds of devotees thronged to see Him. People from all walks of life, ranging from ordinary poor people and peasants to great kings, visited Him. Meeting them all at once became a serious obstacle to His solitude. This made it necessary to have some control over the visitors.

The Buddha never thought in terms of deploying the police to restrain these crowds. It was the habit of the supremely Enlightened One to receive all those who came to Him, with no thought whatsoever of their status, and to talk to them in the kindest possible words. But, as the Buddha advanced in years, He needed the assistance of a person to receive these visitors, and to help Him in His activities. He needed a companion, an attendant, in other words, a valet. The Buddha needed someone to attend on Him in His tours of villages, market towns and cities, when He travelled hundreds of miles on foot. In the first twenty years of His life as the Buddha, Elders **Nāgasamāla**, **Nāgita**, **Upavana**, **Chunda Samanuddesa**, **Sāgata**, **Rādha and Meghiya** attended upon the Buddha from time to time, performing such tasks as taking along the Buddha's alms-bowl and robes. But they were not able to perform that service to the Buddha's fullest satisfaction.

On one occasion, when the Buddha was travelling along in villages and market towns with Ven. **Nāgasamāla**, they came

to a two-way junction. The Buddha turned to the road along which they should go. **Nāgasamāla** said, "I cannot go along this path. I want to go along the other road." The Buddha said that He was not keen to take that road. Then **Nāgasamāla** responded, "If that is so, you go along that road. I will take this path." So saying, he placed the Buddha's alms-bowl and robes at the center of the junction and went away. The Buddha had to face this kind of difficulty on account of His attendants, on several occasions.

One day, twenty years after He became the Buddha, He assembled the monks together. He said to them, "O monks, I have now reached old age. Those monks who attend upon me go along a different path when I want to travel along a given road. Some monks even place my alms-bowl and robes on the ground and go away. Under these circumstances, I need a permanent attendant." All the assembled monks were shocked and moved by the statement made by the Buddha.

Ven. **Sāriputta** stood up at once, and said, "Sir, I will be your attendant from this day on." The Buddha responded, "**Sāriputta**, I do not quite like you attending upon me. If you are present somewhere, that area is not empty. Your advice is quite similar to mine. Therefore, I do not need you to attend upon me."

Next, Ven. **Moggallāna** stood up and volunteered to be the Buddha's attendant. This way, many out of the eighty prominent disciples volunteered with great vehemence to be the Buddha's personal attendant. The Buddha set them all aside. While this was going on, only Ven. Ananda did not stand up

to offer his services. Seeing this the monks addressed Ven. Ananda. They said, "Ven. Ananda, all the monks requested to be made the Buddha's personal attendant. Only you are silent. Why don't you ask for that position?"

Ven. Ananda responded, "My venerable colleagues, there is not much value in obtaining posts by begging for them. The Buddha knows me well. If He likes me, the Buddha will tell me 'Ananda, you must become my personal attendant'.

Chapter Seven

Eight Conditions Essential For The Buddha's Personal Attendant

The whole assembly of monks requested Ven. Ananda to ask for the position of the Buddha's personal attendant. But Ven. Ananda remained silent. The Buddha, observing this situation, said: "O Monks, Ananda should not be persuaded by others. He himself will make up his mind to become my personal attendant." Hearing this the other monks asked Ven. Ananda to stand up and ask for the position of the Buddha's personal attendant. Ven. Ananda stood up and said:

> "O Sir, I will become your personal attendant if the Blessed One recognizes the four factors I dislike and the four factors I like."

The Buddha: "What are the four things you dislike?"

Ven. **Ananda**: "Sir, you must not give me the good robes offered to you. You must not give me the delicious choice foods offered to you. You must not make me reside in your Fragrant Chamber. You must not take me along to alms-givings to which you are invited."

The Buddha: "All right. Those are the things you dislike. Now, what are the things you like?"

Ven. **Ananda**: "You must attend the alms-givings to which I have accepted invitations. You must allow me to escort to you those people who come from various countries to see you. I must have permission to come and talk to you anytime I have some doubt. You must tell me exactly all the Sermons, Discourses and discussions you have had when I was not present. You must describe to me all the incidents that took place during my absence."

The Buddha: "Why do you dislike the four things you mentioned first?"

Ven. **Ananda**: Sir, if I lived in the same Fragrant Chamber with you, partaking of the delicious choice foods you are offered, using valuable robes and other requisites offered to you, and responding to invitations sent to you, while attending upon you, others will begin to say 'Who will not be able to attend upon the Buddha, if such advantages can be enjoyed?' I do not brook such fault findings."

The Buddha: "All right. You said that you liked four things. With what advantage in mind did you ask for those four things?"

Ven. **Ananda**: "Sir, if a devotee who cannot meet you were to meet me and invite me to come to their house for alms with the Buddha, I must have the privilege to take you along there. If that cannot be done it is not in keeping with my position as your attendant. I must have the privilege of bringing to you those who come to see you. If I have a doubt about the Doctrine, about an issue or about an incident, I must have direct access to you to get that doubt dispelled. If I do not have that privilege it is not in keeping with my position. People ask me where or for whom such and such a Stanza, such and such a Discourse or such and such a birth tale was preached by the Buddha. If I cannot answer such a question it is demeaning for me. Therefore, you must tell me the Discourses you had when I was not with you.

The Buddha: "The conditions you stipulated are just. I will very gladly grant you those. I will appoint you to the position of my permanent attendant from this day."

Ven. Ananda accepted that high position with great pleasure. The whole assembly of monks was highly pleased that the person who was really suitable for the position received it.

The attitude of Ven. Ananda teaches an outstanding moral lesson both to those who receive various positions, and also to those who give various positions. In spite of the fact that Ven. Ananda had all the qualifications for the position, he did not ask for it, because any position you ask for and get is not of much value. Asking for it is, by itself, a major disqualification. It is the primary duty of those leaders, rulers and author-

ities who appoint people, to give such positions only to those who really deserve them. Appointing people to positions for which they are not qualified brings about the deterioration of society. Besides, giving such appointments is an unpardonable crime.

As a leader and an administrator, of his eighty main disciples, the Buddha would appoint monks to various positions only in terms of their efficiency in certain areas. He never appointed monks to these positions just by looking at their faces. (**Na bhikkhave**, **mukhaṃ oloketvā dammī**.) Giving a position to the individual who deserved it – to the person who had the ability – was a policy the Buddha implemented 2,500 years ago. This is now being esteemed by the moderns.

Ven. Ananda, who received those eight privileges, was not only the Buddha's personal attendant, he was also the Buddha's private secretary. Like an expert writer Ven. Ananda recorded in his mind as in a note-book the Sermons and Discourses of the Buddha, His discussions and dialogues, questions asked of Him and replies given by Him, and also the events and incidents that took place. He kept all those in mind. He memorized them thoroughly.

All these Suttas (Discourses – Sermons) – introduced by the phrase "**Evaṃ me sutaṃ**" ("Thus have I heard") – are from Ven. Ananda's memory. He had asked the Buddha about them, and kept them in his mind. Although he did not put pen to paper, the totality of the Three Baskets (**Tipiṭaka**) is Ven. Ananda's work. This is a great treasure endowed upon the world by Ven. Ananda.

The highest limit that a human brain can contain, the maximum a human memory can retain, is exemplified by Ven. Ananda's memorization of the **Tipiṭaka** (The Three Baskets). In a way this is a record of human heroism. No one else, other than Ven. Ananda, has performed this kind of feat in human history.

He set a human record as the Chief Attendant to the Enlightened One. That is, the rejection of all the glory, praise, advantages and privileges due to him for holding that position. This is a quality that is very rarely seen in a human being.

Chapter Eight

Venerable Ananda Functions As The Buddha's Attendant

Ven. Ananda had performed the duties of the Buddha's attendant sporadically. But after he was officially appointed as the permanent personal attendant of the Buddha, he performed his duties to the letter. He performed all the duties of this position which he had aspired to, over a long period of time. When the Buddha needed cold water he offered it to Him. When the Buddha needed warm water he would offer Him that too. He kept the Buddha's Fragrant Chamber scrupulously clean – morning and night. He never left room for the Buddha to say I need such and such things. He did not allow the Buddha to summon him by his name, Ananda, twice. He would come immediately when he called. He acted with a

perfect awareness of the Buddha's feelings, his activities and his life-style.

Daily, both day and night, people of various calibre called upon the Buddha. Among this steady stream of callers were kings, guild-leaders, ministers, courtiers, Brahmins well-versed in the Three Vedas, ascetics of various types, queens, princesses, poor people, way-farers, opponents and disciples of the Buddha. Most of them had not met the Buddha before. Ven. Ananda performed the duty of having the various callers meet the Buddha in such a manner that the visitors would not be disappointed, and the Buddha would not be exhausted. He performed these duties in the best possible way.

There is no knowing whether he adopted the "first come – first served" principle or some other system. But most visitors thought meeting Ven. Ananda was itself a blessing, even if they could not meet the Buddha. Most people were happy just to see Ven. Ananda. He safeguarded the Buddha's leisure while winning the good-will of the visitors. Throughout the night he walked nine times around the Fragrant Chamber with a lighted torch in hand, and protected the Buddha as a dedicated, strong and sincere sentinel. Human history does not record such a dedicated service accorded, such an amazingly sincere protection given by one man to another, by a servant to the master, or by a pupil to the teacher. Ven. Ananda never, even for a moment, attempted to exploit the Buddha's greatness. He never tried to arrogate to himself the greatness of the Enlightened One. To those "little" men who associate with great men closely and remain always by their side, Ven. Ananda's humility, honesty and loyalty to his superior are a great moral lesson.

Chapter Nine

Venerable Ananda Becomes The Greatest In Five Areas

O monks, of all my disciples, the greatest in terms of versatility is Ven. Ananda. Ven. Ananda is the greatest among those with high memory power, greatest in wise behavior, greatest among the energetic and greatest among committed attendants. **Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ bahussutānaṃ yadidaṃ Ānando**, **satimantānaṃ yadidaṃ Ānando**, **gatimantānaṃ yadidaṃ Ānando**, **dhitimantānaṃ yadidaṃ Ānando**, **upaṭṭhākānaṃ yadidaṃ Ānando**.

One day, a Brahmin named **Gopaka Moggallāna** came to Ven. Ananda and spoke to him thus: "O Ven. Ananda, the long-lived one, you are well-known as a versatile person in the Order of the Buddha. To achieve that status, what is the quantity of Dhamma preached to you by the Buddha? How much Dhamma have you preached?"

Responding to him, Ven. Ananda said: "**Dvāsīti Buddhato gaṇhiṃ dve sahassāni bhikkhuto caturāsīti sahassāni ye me Dhammā pavattino**."

"O Brahmin, I have learnt eighty-two thousand forms of Dhamma from the Buddha. And, from such Venerables as Sariputta I have learnt two thousand forms of Dhamma. All together I have studied eighty-four thousand forms of Dhamma."

Of the two thousand forms studied through the Discourses delivered by the Buddha's disciples, **Sāriputta Sutta**, three **Ānanda Suttas**, **Samādhi Asama**, **subha Bāhitika**, **Sekha**, **Aṭṭhakanāgara**, **Gopaka Moggallāna**, **Aññatitthi**, **Bhūmija Nidhāna**, **Bhaddaji**, **Nigaṇṭha** and other suttas, and several variations of **Dasadhamma** and other Suttas, and **Ānanda Sthavirāpadāna** were all preached by Ven. Ananda himself.

This way, from the position of Dhamma treasurer, he studied, memorized and preached the Dhamma, he was designated the foremost among the versatiles. How is it that Ven. Ananda was pronounced the most outstanding in the power of memory? There are other monks whose memory is distinguished. But they cannot be compared to Ven. Ananda.

He, Ven. Ananda, bears in his mind the words of the Buddha for ever, just as lion-oil poured into a vessel of gold. Herein, his capacity to retain the Dhamma in memory is far greater than that of other disciples. There is a reason for this memory power.

Ven, Ananda possessed a potentiality acquired in past births. He made his knowledge perfectly clear by studying, by listening and by questioning in association with his teachers. He had attained the stream-winner (**sotāpanna**) status in spiritual achievement. He had obtained much learning through listening to the Dhamma. Because of these four efficiencies, Ven. Ananda was capable of understanding teachings with tremendous articulation in the four ways – namely – the realization of the significance of the Dhamma in depth, realization of the doctrinal in depth, acquiring the method of discoursing in

depth and the achievement of comprehensive in-depth awareness.

Ven. Ananda was adorned with seven types of qualities – namely, introductory awareness, higher understanding, previous potentialities, capacity to analyze what is right and wrong, establishment in the foundations of Dhamma, proper consideration, and all were acquired through his close association with the Buddha.

Because of these seven qualities, the mind-body phenomena became clear to him, just as such pieces of furniture as beds and chairs become clearly visible when a lamp is lit in a four-cubit room. This way, Ven. Ananda was pronounced the highest among the disciples in mindfulness.

How did Ven. Ananda become the greatest among the disciples in the wisdom asset? There are other disciples who possess the wisdom asset. But none of those is comparable to Ven. Ananda, who could memorize, while remaining in one posture, sixty thousand lines, or in other words fifteen-thousand stanzas. This way, he retained the doctrine exactly as it was expounded by the Buddha. This explains why he was pronounced the higher among the disciples possessing the wisdom-asset. How did Ven. Ananda possess the virile diligence to study, practise and memorize the word of the Buddha? Ven. Ananda was pronounced the greatest among the disciples in virile diligence.

How did Ven. Ananda become the greatest among attendant disciples? There were other attendant disciples. But the other attendant disciples did not render that service to the satisfac-

tion of the Buddha. That is why there were no attendant disciples comparable to Ven. Ananda. As attendant, Ven. Ananda did not serve the Buddha like other attendant disciples such as Ven. **Nagasamala**. Besides, other attendant disciples did not serve as long as Ven. Ananda. They failed to win the mind of the Buddha just as Ven. Ananda did. But Ven. Ananda attended upon the Buddha, since he was appointed to that position, with unflagging effort, with affection, with obedience and with devotion, entirely to the satisfaction of the Buddha. When Nalagiri the Elephant approached the Buddha to destroy him, Ven. Ananda, desiring to sacrifice his own life, stood in front of the Buddha saying "I will save my Blessed immortal Buddha." This was why he was pronounced the greatest among attendant disciples.

(Sāvaka Carita – Manotathapurani – Etadegga Pāli)

Chapter Ten

The Monk Who Had A Great Appeal To Ladies

There was no other monk in the whole of the Buddha's Order who had such a great appeal to ladies as Ven. Ananda. He was a Warrior Prince. His physical appearance was comely and outstanding. His voice was appealing in the extreme. He had a pleasant personality, a quality of humility. He was quite kind. Because of all these qualities, ladies liked very much to see him and to talk to him. They were happy with him. Chief

consorts of kings, ladies of harems and nuns were happy to listen to his sermons.

Ven. Ananda became an Arahant only after the demise of the Enlightened One. Ven. Ananda, who was in the Stream-Winner stage, did not have any passionate thoughts at any time, any day, any moment. Many women may have loved Ven. Ananda. Many nuns would have loved him. But Ven. Ananda never reciprocated the love, the affection they had. He never generated even an iota of passionate thought in response to these advances.

This is a very strange situation for a human mind that was not devoid of attachment but was disciplined. It is a miracle. Ven. Ananda, who was a royal Prince, never forgot the status of his clan, the position of his Master, his own office, and the state of the most noble Person to whom he was companion. He never allowed his greatness to be blemished because of a woman. He never allowed his monkhood to be sullied because of a woman. He had accepted the fact that monkhood was a hundred times – nay – a thousand times greater than a woman.

Chapter Eleven

The Two Chief Queens Of King Kosala Learn The Doctrine From Venerable Ananda

It was Ven. Ananda who instructed the two chief queens of king **Kosala** – Queen **Mallikā** and Queen **Vāsabhakhattiyā**

– in the Dhamma. The author of **Saddharmaratanāvalī** describes this situation in the following manner.

King **Kosala** went to the Buddha and said:

> "Sir, Queen **Mallikā and Vāsabhakhattiyā** are keen to learn the Dhamma. Please visit the palace with 500 monks and teach them the Dhamma."

The Buddha replied:

> "O, Great King, the Buddha does not visit one place always. That would prevent the masses acquiring merit."

"If that is so, please assign one monk," the King said.

The Buddha assigned Ven. Ananda. Ven. Ananda visited the palace alone and taught Dhamma. Of these two, Queen **Mallikā** learned the Dhamma well. She studied it and repeated it later. **Vāsabhakhattiyā** did not learn well. She did not study. She was unable to repeat what was taught.

One day, the Buddha asked Ven. Ananda:

> "How, Ananda, do the Queens study Dhamma?"
>
> "Yes, Sir," he replied.
>
> "Of these two, who studies with concentration of mind?"
>
> "Sir, **Mallikā** studies with concentration. Her method of study and her style of repeating what was learned are both satisfactory. **Vāsabhakhattiyā**, the daughter of your kinsman, does not learn well. The way she studies and repeats is unsatisfactory."

(Saddharmaratnāvalī)

Chapter Twelve

Ladies Of The Harem Of King Udeni Request Venerable Ananda To Preach To Them

The five hundred queens of King Kosala went to the monastery daily but were not able to listen to the Sermon. The queens saw the king and said: "O Lord, you go to see the Buddha three times a day, and listen to Sermons. Ladies, like **Visākhā** too, visit the monastery and acquire merit. But we of your harem cannot acquire merit by listening to the Dhamma. After long æons the Buddha has appeared among us. He lives in our city like a wish-fulfilling tree that has sprung up in front of the house of a poor person. But we are like those suffering thirst in the middle of the sea. We are like birds who cannot escape even after reaching the sky. We are like those who cannot get help even on earth. We are very unfortunate. We are like birds in a cage. We are like those who suffer greatly, unable to reach the path to merit by travelling about."

"As we cannot hear the Sermons preached by the Buddha in His sweet voice we are like those without ears. As we cannot see at least one of the Three Gems each day, we are like those without eyes. As we have no opportunities to learn at least one virtue of the Buddha, we are like those devoid of life. As we cannot derive any delight through the Dhamma we are like those without minds. As we cannot walk to see the Buddha, we are like those without feet. As we cannot see Him and worship Him everyday, we are like those without bodies. As we cannot offer what we like after listening to the

Dhamma, we are like those without money though we have wealth. Although you have given us all this affluence, as we cannot acquire merit, it is like suffering in the woeful state. O Lord, if you like us especially, please take us to the monastery each day when you go to the monastery to listen to the Sermons. If it is not possible, make an arrangement for us to listen to the Dhamma everyday."

The king replied: "Going to the monastery every day with ladies is awkward. I will make an arrangement for you to listen to the Dhamma." He pacified the ladies that way and tried to find out who was capable of preaching sermons most effectively in the whole city.

One day, he heard from the Buddha Himself that a male lay-devotee by the name of Chattapani who was a non-retumer (**anāgāmi**), was greatly advanced spiritually. The king summoned him to the palace and said that the Buddha told him about his virtuous ways. "The Buddha said that you were very much learned in the Dhamma. He also said that you are a great exponent of the Dhamma. Could you please preach the Dhamma to my harem from today?"

Chattapani replied this way: "O Lord, preaching Dhamma to the harem is not proper for us laymen who wear white clothes. It is fit only for robed monks. Ladies do not love laymen. They are frightened of virtuous persons. Therefore, please request the Buddha to send a great elder to preach Dhamma. This way it will be useful both to those who preach and to those who listen. Besides, when the Dhamma is learned from those virtuous persons the results are very good." Convincing the king that way he escaped the responsibility. The king was con-

vinced that it was the proper thing to do. He told the queens: "I am going to see the Buddha to request Him to assign a great elder to preach the Dhamma to you. Who is the Elder you like?"

"Ven. Ananda is the most blessed person in the Buddhist Order. All men and women hold him in high affection. Besides, his voice is sweet. Therefore, as women are fond of sweet voices, without any other suggestion, we would like to listen to the Dhamma from Ven. Ananda himself."

Chapter Thirteen

Venerable Ananda Preaches To The Queens In The Harem

Hearing this, the King worshipped the Buddha and said: "Sir, please visit my palace with five hundred monks, without an interruption. Five hundred women, including **Sāmāwathie**, wish to listen to sermons."

Then the Supreme Buddha replied: "O, Great King, Enlightened Buddhas are compassionate towards all. Even the masses desire to see the Buddha Himself. Therefore, if we were to visit one place without interruption, how could the masses acquire merit?"

At this, the King said: "If that is so, please assign one monk to preach to **Sāmāwathie** and 500 ladies."

Hearing this, the Buddha summoned Ven. Ananda and said: "Ananda, from now on you must preach to King Udeni's harem." The Buddha thus arranged for Ven. Ananda to preach to them. Ven. Ananda, with a retinue of 500 monks, visited the palace and preached constantly. The 500 ladies would offer alms to 500 monks and would listen only to Ven. Ananda. One day, exceedingly pleased at the sermon preached by Ven. Ananda, these five hundred ladies offered him 500 shawls.

(Saddharmaratnavalī)

Chapter Fourteen

Ladies Of The Harem Get Sons Who Resemble Venerable Ananda

The king visited the Buddha at **Jetavanārāma** and said: "O Sir, the ladies of my harem desire to listen to the Dhamma from Ven. Ananda himself. Please assign him to preach the Dhamma to the harem." Seeing that the king hesitated even about trivial matters the Buddha told him: "O great king, you can be turned in any direction like a round plate or a stake planted in the mud. Ven. Ananda has achieved **Sotāpatti** (Stream-Winner) status. Knowing that you yourself must be circumspect Ven. Ananda is quite suitable to preach to your harem. You yourself must be aware."

Preparing the king that way, He called in Ven. Ananda. "Ananda, visit the harem of King Kosala daily and preach the Dhamma."

From that day on Ven. Ananda visited the harem and, preaching the Dhamma to the ladies, made it possible for them to accumulate much merit. When this Dhamma preaching continued for some time those ladies became passionately engrossed in the Dhamma preaching voice of Ven. Ananda, like she-elephants attracted by the mantram that charms them, and like heavenly maidens exceedingly attached to the **Chitralatā** Pleasure Park. They gave birth to five hundred sons whose limbs were exactly like those of Ven. Ananda.

The queens, because of the passion they conceived for the voice of Ven. Ananda, gave birth to five hundred sons, exactly like Ven. Ananda. When that happened many people went to the king and said: "The sons given birth to by your queens do not resemble you. They look like Ven. Ananda." This way those of different faiths tried to make the king ashamed.

The king too had suspicions. He went to the Buddha and informed Him of this. The Buddha said: "Didn't I tell you at the beginning itself of your own status?" By explaining what is mentioned in the code of discipline the Buddha dispelled the king's doubts. The king, understanding the Ven. Elder, worshipped him and put the five hundred princes in Ven. Ananda's charge, saying: "That is the atonement for my suspicion about you." Those five hundred princes grew up and were ordained by Ven. Ananda. They eventually became Arahants.

On one occasion about a thousand silk shawls worth thousands were presented to the king from the state of Kasi. Seeing these the king was pleased. He presented five hundred of these to the five hundred queens. They happily presented all five hundred shawls to Ven. Ananda, after listening to his sermon that day, and went to the place where the king had his meals, wearing old clothes. The king asked them: "Why have you worn old clothes without wearing the new ones I gave you yesterday?"

"O Sir, we listened to the sermon preached by Ven. Ananda and offered all those shawls to him as a Dhamma gift." The king was astonished. He asked: "Did Ven. Ananda himself take all those five hundred shawls?" "Yes, he did," the ladies replied.

"When he has received so many shawls, undoubtedly he has started a trade in shawls. It is not proper for monks to receive many offerings." He resented the action of Ven. Ananda. At the end of his meal, even before the water on his hands dried up, he rushed to the monastery and, before seeing the Buddha, he entered into the assembly hall of monks and worshipped Ven. Ananda. Standing at a respectable distance the king asked him:

> **The king**: "O Sir, do queens of my palace learn the Dhamma from you? Do they ask you questions?"
>
> **Ven**. **Ananda**: "O great king, they learn what has to be learnt. They ask what has to be asked."

The king: "O Venerable Sir, do they enquire after your well-being? Do they offer you robes and cloths?"

Ven. **Ananda**: "Last evening after listening to the Dhamma they offered me five hundred shawls."

The king: "Did you accept all of them?"

Ven. **Ananda**: "Yes, O great king, I accepted."

The king: "The Buddha has approved only three robes for one monk. Why did you accept the additional offerings?"

Ven. **Ananda**: "O great king, the Buddha has approved three robes for each monk for personal use. But He has not prevented anyone from accepting any quantity of offerings. Some monks receive excess offerings according to the pleasure of those who offer, and according to the merit of those who receive. Forest-dwelling Monk Tissa, when he was a child of seven, received about a thousand alms bowls of milk-rice in one day. The Elder gave those thousand alms bowls of milk-rice to a thousand monks. The same Elder received a thousand carpets in one day. Those too he gave to a thousand monks. In the same way, I accepted those five hundred shawls and offered them to five hundred monks whose robes were thread-bare."

The king: "When they receive the new robes what do they do with worn robes?"

Ven. **Ananda**: "O great king, they patch up the old robes and make them robes for covering themselves with."

The king: “What do they do with the old robes they use for covering themselves with, when they are worn out?”

Ven. **Ananda**: “They cut away worn places, take the unworn places, and use them as under-robes.”

The king: “What do they do with old under-robes?”

Ven. **Ananda**: “O great king, they use them for bed sheets.”

The king: “What do they do with their old bed sheets?”

Ven. **Ananda**: “They spread them on the floor.”

The king: “What do they do to the old floor cloths?”

Ven. **Ananda**: “They make foot cloths out of them.”

The king: “What do they do with old foot cloths?”

Ven. **Ananda**: “O great king, it is not proper to throw away what has been offered by devotees. Therefore, those worn out foot cloths are cut up into bits and pieces, mixed with clay and are used them to make walls of residences that belong to the brotherhood.”

The king became exceedingly happy with Ven. Ananda. He became extremely pleased with the Buddha’s Dispensation. “O Sir, I learnt from you that what is offered to you does not get wasted even after it has been used as foot cloths. This way great merit accrues to those people who make offerings to the Buddha’s Dispensation.” The king extolled the virtues of Ven. Ananda. I will compensate for suspecting such a noble person

like you." Seated there, he sent word to the palace and had the remaining five hundred shawls sent as well. He offered them, too, to Ven. Ananda.

This way, Ven. Ananda is the greatest among those who get offerings of robes in the Dispensation of the Buddha. This way, he received on five hundred occasions, five hundred offerings of robes. Other offerings he received were numerous. All the offerings received by the disciples were offerings received by the Buddha Himself. When soldiers win a battle the king is said to have won. When a field produces paddy, such and such a farmer is said to have produced paddy. In the same way the Buddha gets the credit for the achievements of disciples.

Chapter Fifteen

A Bhikkhuni Resents Venerable Maha Kassapa Advising Venerable Ananda

Ven. Maha Kassapa resided at one time at Kalandaka Nivapa in Veluvana at Rajagaha. At this time Ven. Ananda was sojourning in Dakkhina Giri Region with a large retinue of monks. Of these about thirty monks gave up robes. Ven. Ananda had an audience with Ven. Maha Kassapa, worshipped him and informed him about this incident.

Hearing this, Ven. Maha Kassapa said: "Ven. Ananda, why did you go on a sojourn with those newly ordained undisci-

plined young monks? I feel that you too behave like a novice, without any consideration for your status." Ven. Ananda responded: "Ven. Maha Kassapa, even my hair has turned grey now. But you say that I am like a child." At this, Ven. Maha Kassapa said: "Ven. Ananda, when you travel with newly ordained young monks who are devoid of restraint or discipline, it is like the destruction of grains. It amounts to the destruction of families of devotees. When you travel along with such people, devotees get disillusioned."

The story that Ven. Maha Kassapa told Ven. Ananda that he was like a novice – a child – came to the ears of a nun called Thullananda. She resented this statement and said: "Who is this Ven. Maha Kassapa? He is a person who lived with misbelievers. Later on he came to the Buddha and was ordained. Is it proper for such a person to talk that way to Vedeha Muni Ven. Ananda?"

Ven. Maha Kassapa heard the statement made by Nun Thullananda. Hearing it, Ven. Maha Kassapa addressed Ven. Ananda: "Consider this, Ven. Ananda. Just see what Thullananda has said. She has said that I was once a follower of non-believers. If I became ordained some day it was entirely because of the Buddha – and not because of any other teacher. I do not know of any other religious teacher than the Buddha. Thullananda has made this statement in a spirit of malice. I became a monk entirely disillusioned with lay-life. And because I was convinced of the virtues of being a monk. I gave up silk apparel, Kasi shawls. I was on my way to see the Buddha in yellow robes. On my way I saw the Buddha at **Bahuputtaka** monastery, between the cities of **Rājagaha and**

Nalandā. I went near Him, going down on my knees I worshipped Him, saying: “This is my Teacher, I became a monk because of you.” The Buddha accepted me and preached the Dhamma to me. Within seven days I attained Sainthood.

On another occasion I heard that the Buddha was seated under a tree. I went there and folded my silk robe four-fold, and made Him a seat to sit on. The Buddha sat on it and touched it with his hand and said that the robe was very smooth. When he said that I offered that robe to Him. I clad myself in the thread-bare hemp robe the Buddha was wearing. Therefore, if someone has to be described as the Buddha’s true son, as the person born of His mouth, as the individual who has been completely fashioned by His Dhamma, as the person who is born out of His Dhamma, as the person who accepted the worn-out, thread-bare robe discarded by the Buddha, it is I who should be described that way.

Ven. Ananda, I have acquired the highest fruits of spirituality through the elimination of defilements in this birth itself, through my own effort and through my own higher wisdom. If someone were to consider that my six-fold higher powers could be concealed, that person is like an individual who feels that an elephant who is either seven-and-a-half cubits or seven cubits tall could be covered with a palm-leaf “

Nun Thullananda repented her unrestrained words and gave up robes of her own choice.

Chapter Sixteen

Nuns Care More For Venerable Ananda Than For Venerable Maha Kassapa

On one occasion when Ven. Maha Kassapa was residing at **Jetavanārāma** in the city of **Sāvatthi**, Ven. Ananda approached him and suggested: "Ven. Sir, shall we go over to the monastery of nuns and preach them Dhamma?" Ven. Maha Kassapa said: "You are a busy person. Why don't you go yourself?" Ven. Ananda insisted several times, and on that insistence he agreed to the suggestion. He visited the monastery of nuns with Ven. Ananda following him and preached the Dhamma to them.

The nuns who listened were exceedingly pleased. But one of the nuns – Thullatissa – said with displeasure: "It looks as if a forest-dwelling, shroud-clad monk is trying to be an exponent of the Dhamma in the presence of Ven. Ananda, who is well-versed in the Tipitaka (The Three Baskets) and is also the Treasurer of the Dhamma. Ven. Maha Kassapa, preaching the Dhamma in the presence of Ven. Ananda, is similar to selling needles in the presence of a needle-maker."

Hearing this, Ven. Maha Kassapa observed: "Ven. Ananda, if that were so you are the needle-maker and I am the needle-seller." Ven. Ananda responded: "Ven. Sir, women are foolish (**bālo mātugāmo**). Please do not take that statement seriously." Ven. Maha Kassapa said: "Ven. Ananda, please take care that the monks will not begin to have suspicions about nuns in

the future." (**Āgamehi taṃ āvuso Ānanda mā te sangho uttariṃ upaparikkhi**.)

"Ven. Ananda, I can dwell as long as I like, absorbed in the first stage of trance, savouring the bliss and ease arising out of the sense of freedom, mixed with thought-conception and discursive thinking. Has the Buddha said in the presence of the assembly of monks that Ananda too is capable of achieving this?" Ven. Ananda responds saying: "No, he has not." Ven. Maha Kassapa said: "But, Ven. Ananda, the Buddha has declared in the presence of the assembly of monks that if I can remain absorbed in the First Stage of Trance savouring the bliss and ease arising out of the sense of freedom, mixed with thought-conception and discursive thinking, Ven. Maha Kassapa too can remain absorbed as long. Ven. Ananda, has the Buddha declared that, 'O Monks, I have, for all practical purposes, achieved the trance and the deep wisdom of sainthood, and that Ven. Ananda, too, has achieved that status.'?"

Responded Ven. Ananda: "No, Sir." On that, Ven. Maha Kassapa said: "But the Buddha declared in the presence of the assembly of monks that just as I have, for all practical purposes, achieved the trance and the deep wisdom of sainthood, Maha Kassapa too has achieved it." "Therefore, Ven. Ananda, if someone were to think that he or she could hide my six higher powers (**Chalabiññā**) it is like the attempt to hide under a palm-leaf an elephant who is either seven cubits or seven-and-a-half cubits tall.

Nun Thullatissa, repenting her undisciplined use of words, left the robes of her own choice.

Chapter Seventeen

Venerable Ananda's Mishap At The Palace

At the request of King Kosala the Buddha assigned Ven. Ananda to preach the Dhamma to the women of the harem. In terms of this Ven. Ananda visited the palace from time to time. One day, when Ven. Ananda visited the palace, the King and Queen Mallika were in one bed. Seeing Ven. Ananda approaching at a distance, Queen Mallika got up hurriedly. When she stood up that way, the gold hued silk saree she was wearing fell off her body.

Ven. Ananda directly went back to the Monastery and told the other monks about this. The monks informed the Buddha. The Buddha instructed Ven. Ananda not to visit the palace without informing someone in advance that he was coming on such-and-such a day at such-and-such an hour. He promulgated a law. The Buddha explained ten issues that a person visiting the King's harem would have to face.

(Pācittiya Pāli)

Chapter Eighteen

Venerable Ananda Distributes Rice Cakes To Beggars

The Buddha resided at the domed hall in **Mahāvana** at **Vesāli**. At that time alms began to arrive for the monks like a vast flood. Ven. Ananda informed the Buddha that even after the monks had their meals, a great amount of rice, curries and sweet meats were left over.

The Buddha asked for these to be given to beggars. Ven. Ananda got beggar-men and beggar-women seated in a row and started distributing rice cakes, one for each person. But, without knowing it, he had given two rice cakes to a beggar woman. The other beggar woman seated next to her asked the woman who got two cakes: "Why did he give you two cakes? Is Ven. Ananda your illicit lover?" That beggar-woman replied: "No, it is not so. When he wanted to give one, two came in error."

Whatever had happened, even at the second round of distribution, she got two rice cakes. The beggar-woman next to her asked for the second time: "Why did he give two rice cakes to you alone? Is Ven. Ananda your illicit lover?" Again, she replied: "Maybe it is an error."

(Pācittiya Pāli)

Chapter Nineteen

Visākhā Forgets Her Headgear: Venerable Ananda Keeps It Safe

Female lay-devotee **Visākhā** went to the monastery wearing her expensive headgear. When she was close to the monastery she took it off and handed it over to her servant maid for safe-keeping. She told the maid: "When I visit my Teacher I cannot otherwise go near him, it is not proper to wear ornaments, covering oneself from head to foot like an actor or actress." She took off the ornament, wrapped it in a cloth and gave it to her maid to keep so that she could wear it on her way back.

Wearing a simple ornament she saw the Buddha. After listening to the Buddha she got ready to return home. Her maid had put her expensive ornament somewhere without remembering exactly where.

Seeing the ornament Ven. Ananda informed the Buddha that **Visākhā** had forgotten to take back her expensive ornament. The Buddha asked Ven. Ananda to keep it safe. As Ven. Ananda had the strength of five elephants he carried it and kept it safe.

Visākhā went about the monastery in the company of Suppia, a female lay-devotee. **Visākhā** was in the habit of enquiring after the health of monks. When she visited young monks would come to her with receptacles and gather round her for ghee and candy. On that day too they gathered round her.

Visākhā enquired after the health of invalid monks and left the monastery from a side-gate. From outside the monastery she asked the maid to fetch the ornament to wear it on her way home. The girl said: "Lady, I forgot about it." "If that is so, try to see whether it is in the place where you kept it. But if Ven. Ananda has put it elsewhere do not bring it back."

Ven. Ananda, seeing the maid, asked her why she came. "I came in search of the ornament," she said. "I had left it near the stair-case." "Go and fetch it," Ven. Ananda said. The maid said: "I was asked not to bring it back if you had touched it." The maid then returned to **Visākhā** empty-handed, and told her what had happened. "I will not wear the ornament touched by the sacred hand of my master Ven. Ananda. It belongs to him now. But he cannot utilize it. I will raise money for it and get something he can use." she thought, and said to the maid: "Go and fetch it." **Visākhā** went back home without wearing it. At home she summoned those who valued such objects. They said that it was worth ninety million and one lakh. She put it in a cart and asked for it to be sold. But in the whole city there was no one who had the wealth to buy it. **Visākhā** herself bought it back for ninety-nine million and one lakh.

In the whole world there were only three people who could wear the ornament – **Visākhā**, Bandhula **Mallikā** and the daughter of the guild leader of Benares, not to say anything about being able to buy it.

Chapter Twenty

Visākhā Auctions The Ornament Touched By Venerable Ananda

Visākhā took the money equal to the value of the ornament in a cart to the monastery, worshipped the Buddha, and said: "I did not want to wear the ornament touched by Ven. Ananda. I will sell it and with the money raised that way, I will do whatever is useful. Although I directed that it be sold there was no one but me in this city who could buy it. Therefore, I bought it myself. Now I have brought along the money I paid for it. Please let me know what requisite out of the four forms of requisites I should provide."

The Buddha said: "If that is so, please build a hall at the Eastern Gate for the whole of the Brotherhood." As Visākhā knew that the building of residential structures was an act that yielded high results she agreed and acquired land for ninety million. Utilizing another nine million she started the building activity.

One morning when the Buddha contemplated the world with limitless compassion, He discovered that **Bhaddiya**, the guild leader who, leaving the world of deities, was born in the family of the guild leader in the city of **Bhaddiya** and had the potentiality to attain Arahanthood. The Buddha had His meal at the residence of **Anāthapiṇiḍika** the guild leader, and left for the North Gate of the city.

Earlier, the Enlightened One used to take his meals at the residence of Visākhā, leave the city through the Southern Gate and to go to Jetavana Monastery, where He dwelt. After **Pūrvārāma** Monastery was built the Buddha would take His meals at the residence of guild leader **Anāthapiṇḍika**, and would leave through the Eastern Gate of the city to go and reside at **Pūrvārāma**. When He left by the North Gate people knew that He was leaving the city to sojourn elsewhere. Hearing that the Buddha was leaving by the North Gate **Visākhā** came over hurriedly, worshipped Him, and asked whether He was leaving to sojourn elsewhere. The Buddha said: "Yes." **Visākhā** said: I am building you a monastery at a cost of one hundred and eight million. Please stay."

"Please do not stop my joumey, **Visākhā**," the Buddha said. She knew that He had someone in mind who had the potentiality to achieve Nibbana. "If you are going, please assign someone to stay and supervise the construction activity," **Visākhā** said. The Buddha said: "If you would like a particular person to stay back, please take his alms-bowl."

She had a special loyalty towards Ven. Ananda. But since Ven. **Moggallāna** had the psychic power to accomplish things and as the work could be completed quickly through his power, she took Ven. **Moggallāna's** alms-bowl. Ven. Moggallana looked at the Buddha. The Buddha said: "Take five hundred of your monks and stay back."

As requested by the Buddha, he stayed back. With his power those who travelled long distances for timber would come back the same day. People never experienced tiredness loading the carts. Whatever the weight of the goods loaded in

them the carts did not break. In a short while a two-storeyed building was constructed. It had one thousand rooms, with five hundred in each floor.

The Buddha returned to the city of Savatthi after nine months. It seemed that work on the two-storeyed building constructed by **Visākhā** would not be completed in one year. But due to the miraculous powers of Ven. Moggallana, the merit of **Visākhā** and the power of the Buddha, the work was completed in nine months.

The Buddha, on His return, was invited to reside at **Pūrvārāma**. The Buddha accepted the invitation. **Visākhā** provided all the meals and other provisions to the Buddha and the monks, without allowing them to go out on their alms-round.

Chapter Twenty–One

Venerable Ananda Consoles A Crying Maiden

A friend of **Visākhā** brought along a cloth worth a thousand, and said to **Visākhā**: "I want to spread this cloth as a carpet in your mansion. Please give me permission." She said: "Friend, if I said there is no place for it you would think I am reluctant to give you permission. You can go yourself, examine the upper floor, the lower floor and the thousand rooms, and select a place for it."

The friend examined the place and found that there was no place where there was a cloth cheaper than that, spread as a

carpet. She started crying because she was not able to participate in this meritorious deed.

Ven. Ananda heard her crying. Just as the Aspirant Buddha, who was Pandit Senaka, asked him why he was crying when Ven. Ananda was a Brahmin in **Sattubhatta Jātaka**, he asked the maiden why she was crying. She explained why she was crying. Ven. Ananda said: "Do not feel disappointed. I will find you a suitable place." He said: "Fold it and keep it between the steps and the moonstone as a floor mat. The monks wash their feet and go into the house wiping their feet. This way, you will reap great merit."

This way he found a place even when **Visākhā** could not find one, and allowed her to participate in the meritorious deed.

(Saddharmaratnāvalī)

Chapter Twenty–Two

A Queen Fights For Women's Liberation. Venerable Ananda Helps

Just as in our time, in the past too, there were disputes and conflicts about the distribution of water from India's rivers, among various kingdoms. In the days of the Buddha there was a major dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas about the distribution of the waters of the River Rohini.

The Buddha intervened on this occasion and asked what was of greater value – water or human life. The Buddha allowed

them to understand reality and preached the Dhamma to them. This way, He brought about the unity between these two clans. After listening to the Dhamma, five hundred royal princes became monks under the Buddha. When they were ordained monks, their wives and the ladies betrothed to them thought it was no use remaining at home when their men were gone.

All of them went to see **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** and said: "Your spouse King Suddhodana passed away into Nibbana after achieving Sainthood. Now you are a lady without a husband, just as all of us are. We too must become ordained, just as our husbands. In this effort you must provide us leadership." **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** approved this idea eagerly. She went to see the Buddha with a retinue of five hundred royal princesses. They worshipped the Buddha, and stayed at a respectful distance.

Mahā Pajāpati Gotami spoke to the Buddha: "Enlightened One, your father and my husband, King Suddhodana, passed away recently after attaining Sainthood. Princes Nanda and Rahula became monks. How can I stay in the palace all alone? The husbands of these princesses too have been ordained monks by you. In consequence, these princesses too desire to be ordained. Therefore please ordain us and establish an order of nuns."

The Buddha knew more than anyone else that women too should have liberty. Therefore, the Buddha considered at once the status of women in India at that time, their social status and the protection of the Order of Bhikkhunis in the future.

Therefore, He did not give His consent at once. He stated the serious problems that would arise and rejected their request.

Mahā Pajāpati Gotami repeated her request several times. But the Buddha rejected the request on all those occasions. Bitterly disappointed the royal ladies, headed by **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, returned home. Several days later the Buddha left **Nigrodhārāma** at Kapilavatthu for the **Kutagāra** monastery at **Visalā**.

The five hundred royal princesses, headed by **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, did not totally give up the idea of being ordained, although the Buddha rejected their request. They were convinced that one day, somehow, they would receive ordination. Deciding to shave their heads on their own and to get ordained themselves, if the Buddha did not allow it, they put on yellow robes after barbers shaved their heads. Thus prepared, all of them marched towards the city of **Visalā**.

Chapter Twenty–Three

The Second Revolution At The Palace

The first revolution in the palace was the Buddha going on the alms-round in the streets of the capital city of His kingdom, after returning to it as an Ascetic, since He left the palace giving up all His royal luxuries to practise austerities in the forest. The second royal revolution was the serene and disciplined march of the five hundred royal ladies, headed by

Mahā Pajāpati Gotami, who had discarded their glamorous costumes and put on yellow robes, with their heads shaven.

They had come down from the upper storeys of the royal palace and were marching towards the city of **Visalā**, their gaze fixed upon the ground.

In their revolution 2,500 years ago, these great royal ladies of North India did not shout such slogans as "Freedom for Women", "Allow us the Right to be Ordained", "Make Us Nuns", "If You Do Not Ordain Us, Give Back Our Husbands To Us". Instead, they went along in the most subdued and disciplined manner.

The news that five hundred royal ladies clad in yellow robes, with their heads shaven, were walking along in a disciplined and orderly line towards the city of **Visalā**, spread like wildfire throughout the city. North Indian royal ladies, who are like divine damsels in beauty, could be seen even by the people of that city only very rarely. The people of that city assembled in their thousands on either side of the streets to catch a glimpse of these royal ladies, exceedingly beautiful in appearance, delicate and given to descending from the upper storeys of their palaces, only very rarely.

Members of the **Sākya-Koliya** royal families heard this news and came hurrying in their golden royal coaches. They brought along five hundred coaches and requested the ladies to travel in their coaches. But they rejected the offer of those five hundred royal coaches, assuming that the Buddha was reluctant to ordain them, thinking that they were too delicate. Therefore, they decided to walk on foot.

The men and women who thronged the streets leading to the city of **Visalā** started worshipping them, impressed by the serene, restrained gait of these royal ladies. They started making them offerings. They begged them to travel in vehicles. As they travelled barefoot, blisters formed on the soles of their feet and burst, making them bleed. Those who saw their bleeding feet started weeping.

This way, they walked a distance of fifty-one yojanas, making thousands of onlookers cry at their ordeal. They ended their historic march to see the Buddha, and the five hundred royal ladies, headed by **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, arrived near the monastery of **Kūtāgāra**. But they did not see the Buddha directly.

In a brief while Ven. Ananda came to know what was happening. Ven. Ananda was exceedingly aggrieved to see their blistered, bleeding and swollen feet, their bodies withered and dirtied by sweat and dust, and their appearance as nuns.

"O mothers, what is it that has happened to you? Why are your soles bleeding? Have you taken to robes like this because some harm has befallen the Warrior Clan (Kshatriyas)? Have you been banished from your land? How have you come to this miserable level? Why have you not met the Buddha even after you visited the monastery?"

At this, **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** responded thus: "Son, Ven. Ananda, no harm has befallen the Warrior Clan. Nor were we banished from the land. My son, Ven. Ananda, I requested the Buddha three times before to ordain us. This time we came

clad like nuns. Since we were not sure whether this time too we would be ordained or not, we did not enter the monastery. We rested here, outside." Ven. Ananda said: "Mother, please rest here for a while." He went into the monastery and stood respectfully to one side. Then he informed the Buddha: "Sir, your step-mother **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** has arrived with a retinue of five hundred royal ladies clad in yellow robes. They are outside crying, not knowing whether they will be given the ordination or not. O Sir, they have travelled fifty-one yojanas. Some of them have bleeding soles as they are split. Some have swollen feet. Some are exhausted and fatigued as if they have faced a great calamity. O Sir, it is good if they could be ordained in this Dispensation."

The Buddha, seeing what was likely to happen in the future, said: "Ananda, please do not try to get women ordained." Ven. Ananda requested for the second time, and for the third time. The Buddha rejected the request on those two occasions too. Next Ven. Ananda put a question to the Enlightened One: "Sir, if a woman is ordained in this Dispensation, will she be able to reach the fruit of **Sotāpatti** or **Anāgāmi**, by practising Insight Meditation?"

The Buddha: Ananda, if a woman is ordained and makes a strong effort she will be able to achieve higher reaches of spirituality.

Ven. **Ananda**: O Sir, if women after being ordained in this Dispensation can reach higher levels of spirituality, why do you not allow them to be ordained? O Sir, **Mahā**

> **Pajāpati Gotami** helped you immensely when your mother Queen **Māya** passed away. She breast-fed you, putting her own infant son Prince Nanda in the charge of nursing mothers. She nourished you and brought you up, turning her blood into milk to feed you. Therefore, Sir, please ordain your step-mother.

Deciding that the pleas and appeals made so far for the establishment of the Bhikkhuni order were sufficient, the Buddha addressed Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, if **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** is quite keen to be ordained, let her accept the eight principal requirements stipulated by the female disciples of the past Buddhas. That itself will be her higher ordination."

The Buddha proclaimed the Eight Principal Requirements. Ven. Ananda went to **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** and said: "Mother, the Buddha has stipulated Eight Principal Requirements for the ordination of women. If you accept these from me you will receive ordination and higher ordination too. That will also be the establishment of the Order of Bhikkhunis (female monks – nuns)." Gotami was exceedingly happy merely at the expression that she could be ordained. She said three times over that she would accept those Eight Principal Requirements. That itself was her higher ordination. The members of her retinue also accepted those Principals and obtained ordination and higher ordination. This is a record set up by women of ancient times in their struggle for liberation. It was their victory. The mediator in this victory was Ven. Ananda. In consequence, Ven. Ananda is the hero in the freedom-struggle of Indian womanhood.

Chapter Twenty–Four

A Bhikkhunī Pretends To Be Ill To Entice Venerable Ananda

Once, Ven. Ananda lived at **Ghositārāma** in the city of Kosambiya. A nun who lived in the monastery for **Bhikkhunīs** became enamoured of Ven. Ananda's physical beauty. She loved him secretly. She resorted to a ruse to entice Ven. Ananda. She called a person known to her and told him thus: "You must go and meet Ven. Ananda. Worship him for me and say this: 'Such and such a nun **Bhikkhunī** is seriously ill. She is keen to see you in her last hours. Therefore, taking pity on her, please visit the monastery of the **Bhikkhunīs**, see her and make her mind calm'."

Ven. Ananda accepted this invitation in sympathy. He wore his robes and, with his alms-bowl in hand, went to the monastery. Seeing Ven. Ananda in the distance the nun rushed to her cell, lay down in her bed, covered from head to foot, and pretended to be seriously ill.

Immediately he entered the place Ven. Ananda realized the truth. Seated in the chair next to her Ven. Ananda began to preach a sermon to her: "Sister, this body is built of food. But through that food itself one must give up the craving for food. The monk ordained in this dispensation takes meals with insight. 'I take this food not for sports, nor to increase my passion, nor for becoming beautiful. And not even to become attractive. But totally for the sustenance of the body – to survive

– to quench the hunger, to protect the monk's vows, to continue the monkhood, to maintain life.' These must be contemplated with wisdom.

"Sister, this body is built of craving. Hearing that a monk ordained in this Dispensation has acquired the liberation of thought by eradicating defilements by one's self, if one were to think 'I too will achieve that state one day', and gives up craving, one can say that craving has been given up through craving itself.

"Sister, this body is built of pride. Pride should be eradicated through pride itself. It can be done only by eradicating all defilements. This body has arisen through sexuality. The Buddha totally eradicated all causes of sexuality. He destroyed them."

The nun who pretended to be ill heard this sermon. She jumped off the bed and fell at the feet of Ven. Ananda and begged for forgiveness, saying: "O Sir, what I did was wrong. Please forgive me for it." Ven. Ananda forgave her.

Chapter Twenty–Five

Venerable Ananda And Women

When we study all the references to Ven. Ananda scattered in various sections of the Tipitaka (The Three Baskets) it becomes quite clear that the Buddhist women in India at that time held Ven. Ananda in great affection, respect and concern.

Āyasmā Ānando mahā puñño sambhāvito. Taṃ rājarāja mahā maccādayo, nimantetva anto nivesane nisīdāpeti. Sabbālaṃkāra patimaṇḍitāpi itthiyo theraṃ upasaṃkamitvā vandityā tāla vaṇthena vījenti upanīsiditvā pañhaṃ pucchanti. Dhammaṃ suṇanti.

(Ven. Ananda is an exceptionally fortunate and greatly respected person. Kings, ministers, invite him to their residences for alms. Ladies, resplendent in every way, go to him, worship him, fan him, and ask him questions.)

This illustrates the attitude of women towards Ven. Ananda. But Ven. Ananda never intended, even in his dreams, to misuse this concern, respect and affection of women towards him. This is quite certain.

Paṇṇa vīsati vassāni – Sekha bhūtassa me sato
Na kāma saññā uppajī – Passa dhamma sudhammataṃ.

(Although it was twenty-five years before I reached the **Sotāpatti** status not even a vestige of sensuous passion arose within me. Consider the greatness of Dhamma.)

This was how Ven. Ananda exulted in the purity of his life. The only great and noble person who knew better than most was the Buddha Himself. When kings of Kosala and Udeni requested the Buddha to assign a monk to preach the Dhamma to the ladies of their harems, the Buddha assigned not such great saints as Ven. **Sāriputta and Moggallāna**, but Ven. Ananda, who had not attained Sainthood. This was an occa-

sion that demonstrated the unshaken, firm and strange confidence the Buddha had in Ven. Ananda.

Let us look at the following:

1. Assigned to the harems of both kings for the preaching of the Dhamma.
2. Assisting five hundred royal ladies, headed by Maha Pajapati Gotami, to receive ordination.
3. Being the object of love of an outcaste maiden.
4. A nun pretending to be ill in order to entice Ven. Ananda.
5. Nuns finding fault with Ven. **Mahā Kassapa** for preaching the Dhamma at the monastery of nuns when Ven. Ananda was present.
6. A nun finding fault with Ven. **Mahā Kassapa** for describing Ven. Ananda as a 'novice'.
7. Enquiring from the Buddha, when the Buddha was in His death bed, about the attitude that should be adopted towards women.
8. When the Buddha passed away in the Great Demise he got the ladies to worship the Buddha's sacred body first, out of the masses who assembled to see the Buddha's sacred body.

When such matters as these are considered one may think that Ven. Ananda had a partiality towards women. If that was so it was because women embodied motherhood.

Two thousand five hundred years ago in India, a country where the social system was determined by Brahmanic thought, one can imagine the kind of freedom women would

have had. Buddhist women too desired to be ordained. When they requested permission for it the Buddha at first rejected the request, primarily to impress upon them the seriousness of the issue and also to see that they were better protected. At such a critical stage Ven. Ananda stepped in and discussed the matter at some length and obtained permission for women to enter the Order as nuns.

This is the first occasion in written history when five hundred women, with no husbands, took the initiative to win freedom. The march of five hundred royal ladies, under the leadership of **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, from the city of Kapilavatthu, with their heads shaven, with bleeding and swollen feet, is an event that should be recorded in golden letters in history. These heroic ladies refused the offer of vehicles, walked on foot, forgetting their royal origin and delicate breeding, with the intention of being ordained.

The only male who helped them in their one request – which was for permission to be ordained – was Ven. Ananda. Ven. Ananda's recognition 2,500 years ago that women too must have an equal right to liberation, **Nibbāna**, just as men do, should be highly esteemed. This was done not because of a special partiality towards women, but because he was motivated by the thought that good things – the highest things – should be common to all.

This way, the name of Ven. Ananda should not be overlooked by women. The respect and esteem of such queens as **Mallikā** and such affluent female lay-devotees as **Visākha**, of nuns and of ladies of harems, were won by Ven. Ananda more than

by any other person. But never was there even the slightest suspicion held regarding him – not by the Buddha, the monks, the nuns or by the general public.

Ven. Ananda, a handsome prince, a monk who had not eradicated all defilements, associated with women but he was never found to be at fault by anyone. This is a great, noble and shining example to the whole of the Brotherhood.

This demonstrates the greatness, personality, moral uprightness and gentlemanly qualities Ven. Ananda possessed as a man. When he kept company with women, when he became considerate towards them, it was entirely for their benefit, and not at all for personal pleasure or personal profit. The noblest characteristic of his great life is that he never thought in terms of getting his monkhood blemished because of women.

Chapter Twenty–Six

The Buddha's Attitude To Women

Most people may tend to feel that the Buddha did not give sufficient consideration to women or that his rating of women was rather low. They are led to think this way for several reasons. When five hundred royal ladies, led by **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, requested permission to enter the Order as nuns, the Buddha did not grant this at first, but allowed it only after many entreaties.

When the Buddha was on His death-bed, Ven. Ananda asked Him what their attitude toward women should be. The Buddha said it would be better not to see them at all if that can be done. The Buddha adopted that attitude not because He had the slightest misgiving about the importance of women. He made this observation because he had a greater regard for the well-being of the Brotherhood and the Dispensation, their purity, and their continued existence. Among factors conducive to the attainment of Liberation – **Nibbāna** – such conditions as unblemished chastity and not being married, assumed a very important position. An unmarried person has an amazing sense of freedom and a capacity to be committed to common good. The moment such a person gets married his public interest turns into selfishness. When he gets children, this selfishness increases several fold. His sense of freedom disappears. His responsibilities and bonds begin to burgeon.

That explains why Prince Siddhartha renounced the world, leaving his wife and child behind. In most instances wives and children prove an obstacle to the achievement of the noble and high ideals of some exceptional people. Had **Prince Siddhārtha** not renounced lay-life probably he would have never achieved Supreme Enlightenment.

Since the Buddha has experienced this situation fully He promulgated all possible laws to keep His disciples out of a sensuous life. He stipulated indulgence in sex as the first cause for the loss of monkhood. He promulgated that law because a proper monkhood was not possible with wives and children, and also because defilements cannot be eradicated that way. Nor can craving be subdued under the same condi-

tion. In that situation life cannot be totally dedicated to service. The order of Buddhist monks continues so long primarily because the monks are a group of chaste, unmarried people.

The Buddha had a very clear vision of the positive side of womanhood as well. The Buddha did not despise women. He did not think of them as low. The Buddha assigned women a higher position than had been given them by contemporary Indian society. He preached to such chief queens as **Mallikā and Samāwathie**. The Buddha assigned high positions to great nuns who achieved sainthood, such as **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**. He helped such ladies as **Kisā Gotami and Patācarā**, who had been overwhelmed by sorrow. He accepted alms even from courtesans, such as **Ambapāli**.

One day, when King Kosala was in conversation with the Buddha, a royal messenger came and whispered in the king's ear: "**Queen Mallikā** has given birth to a daughter. Hearing this the king's face looked disgruntled. Seeing this, the Buddha asked the king: "Why did you look depressed after hearing the secret message of the royal courier?" The king said: "Sir, **Mallikā** has given birth to a daughter." The Buddha said: "O Great King, how good is it to have a daughter. In time she will give birth to a son who will rule a country. Therefore, please bring her up with love and affection." The Buddha consoled King Kosala that way.

This demonstrates the intellectually advanced view adopted by the Buddha about women in a society that tended to assign a low position to women. The Buddha showed an initial reluctance towards the ordaining of women not at all with the intention of refusing them the opportunity to be ordained. It

was only to strengthen their discipline, indicating what a serious matter it was to get ordained. It was also with the intention of providing greater protection to monks and nuns.

When Arahant **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** passed away even the Buddha walked along in the funeral procession. After her body was cremated, the Buddha requested Ven. Ananda to place her bodily relics in the Buddha's own alms-bowl. The Buddha requested the Licchava kings to build a stupa enshrining the alms-bowl containing her bodily relics. The Buddha worshipped that stupa.

What becomes quite evident from the rules of discipline promulgated by the Buddha is that it was dangerous for the monkhood of males with their chaste life to associate closely with women and that it was dangerous for the priesthood and their chaste life, for women to have close associations with men. What the Buddha did was to announce this truth – indicating it as truth.

Chapter Twenty–Seven

Venerable Ananda Ordains Two Orphans

In a household that was frequented by Ven. Ananda everybody, with the exception of two children, succumbed to an epidemic disease called "**Ahi-vātaka roga**". These two children would run to meet the monks when they saw them. The monks would chase them away.

One day, Ven. Ananda saw this and was exceedingly moved by the fate of these two children. He decided to save their lives, at least by ordaining them. But the Buddha had banned the ordaining of children who were less than fifteen years of age.

Knowing this, Ven. Ananda took these two children to see the Buddha, and explained the distress they faced. He requested the Buddha to allow the ordaining of these two children. Altering the Law He had imposed, considering the special circumstances, the Buddha allowed the ordaining of children below fifteen, who could shoo away a crow. In terms of the concession Ven. Ananda had the two orphan children ordained.

(Mahā vaggapāli – Abhyuvara Bhānavāraṃ)

Chapter Twenty–Eight

The Buddha Refuses Cloths Offered By Mahā Pajapati: Ananda Intervenes

Once, when the Buddha was residing at **Nigrodhārāma** Monastery in Kapilavattu, **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** went to see Him, taking along two new cloths. After worshipping the Buddha, she said, "O Blessed One, I have made these two cloths especially for you. I have spun the cotton, made the threads and woven them. I would like to see you wearing these cloths. Therefore, taking pity on me, please accept these."

The Buddha replied, "O Gotami, please give this to the Sangha (brotherhood). Then, you would have offered them to me. You would have given them to the brotherhood, as well." (**Sanghe Gotami dehi**. **Sanghe te dinne ahaṃceva pūjito bhavissāmi sanghoca**.)

Gotami said,

> "Sir, there are cloths to be offered to even five hundred monks, in the royal stores. Those can be given to the brotherhood. What I would like is to offer these to you yourself, and to see you wearing them. Therefore, please accept these."

The Buddha said,

> "Gotami, give these to the Sangha. That way, you give them to me, too." He refused the offer for the second time, too. Gotami entreated for the third time. The Buddha refused for the third time, as well.

Ven. Ananda observed all this. He said,

> "Sir, please accept these cloths offered to you by **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, with such earnestness. It is this Gotami who breast-fed you, bathed you, kept you on her lap, and brought you up. Your own mother, Queen **Maha Māyā**, passed away seven days after you were born. **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** placed her own son in the care of wet-nurses, and fed you at her own breast. She has helped you immensely. She took refuge in the Buddha because of you. She took refuge in the Dhamma because

> of you. She took refuge in the Sangha because of you. She refrained from taking life, from taking what did not belong to her, from sexual misconduct, from uttering falsehood, and from taking intoxicating liquor, because of you. She dispelled her doubts about suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering because of you."

The Buddha replied,

> "Ananda, it is true. If a person were to take refuge in the Three Refuges, were to refrain from five evil actions, were to have unswerving devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, I would not consider that person to have done a great favour to anyone else. If a person were to worship, make offerings, provide the four requisites, I would not consider that such a person would have done a great favour to that individual."

"Ananda, there are fourteen forms of personal offerings.

1. The first personal offering is giving things to the supremely Enlightened One.
2. The second is the offering given to a Pacceka Buddha (Private Buddha).
3. The third is the offering made to an arahant who is a disciple of the Buddha.
4. The offering made to a person making an effort to achieve sainthood.
5. The offering given to a non-returner (**anāgāmi**).

6. The offering to a person who is about to achieve the fruit of **anāgāmi**.
7. The offering to a once-returner (**sakadāgāmi**).
8. The offering to a person making an effort to achieve the fruit of once-returner state.
9. The offering to a stream-winner (**sotāpatti**).
10. The offering to a person who is making an effort to achieve the fruit of stream-winner state.
11. The offering to a person who is detached from passionate pursuits.
12. The offering to a virtuous worldling.
13. The offering to a non-virtuous worldling.
14. The offering made to animals.

"By giving to an animal, one can expect a hundred-fold return; to a non-virtuous worldling, a thousand; to a virtuous worldling, one hundred thousand. If this is the outcome when offerings are made to these persons, who can adequately describe the result of making offerings to those who progress in the path – to arahants, to Private Buddhas, and to a supremely Enlightened Buddha?

"Ananda, there are seven-fold offerings to the Sangha (brotherhood).

1. The first is the offering made to monks and nuns headed by the Buddha.
2. After the demise of the Buddha, the offering made to monks and nuns.

3. The offering made to monks.
4. The offering made to nuns.
5. The offering given, saying, 'I need so many monks and so many nuns, indicating a specific number.'
6. The offering given, saying, 'I need so many monks.'
7. The offering given, saying, 'I need so many nuns.'

"Ananda, in the future, the offering made even to yellow-robe clad ones will have immense good results. Therefore, I would not say that a personal offering, to whomsoever it is offered, is of higher merit than an offering made to the brotherhood. (**Na cevāham Ānanda**, **keneci pariyāyena**, **sanghagatāya dakkhināyu pāṭipugglikaṃ dānam mahapphalataraṃ vadāmi**.) I did not accept the pair of cloths offered to me by **Mahā Prajāpati Gotami**, to increase the merit of the offering by giving them to the brotherhood headed by me, and not because of an animosity towards her, or because I forgot the good she has done to me."

(Dakkina Vibhaṇga Sutta)

Chapter Twenty–Nine

Venerable Ananda Requests The Buddha To Preach The Disciplinary Rules

The Buddha resided at **Pūrvārāma** (also known as **Migāra Mātā** Mansion) in the city of **Sāvatthi**. On a full-moon day Ven. Ananda went to the Buddha, worshipped Him respect-

fully and said: “Ven. Sir, it is late in the night. The first watch of the night is past. The monks have been seated for a long time. Blessed One, could you kindly preach them the Disciplinary Rules (**Pātimokkha**)?”

The Buddha did not respond. For the second time Ven. Ananda made the request. On the second occasion too the Buddha was silent. On the third occasion when Ven. Ananda made the request the Buddha said: “Ananda, the assembled persons are unclean.”

At this Ven. **Moggallāna** examined the minds of all with his own mind. Ven. **Moggallāna** saw with his divine eye that there was one individual whose potential was concealed, whose actions were suspicious, devoid of monastic qualities, corrupted inside, drenched with evil, and full of the garbage of defilements.

Ven. **Moggallāna** got up from his seat and went over to that corrupt monk. Ven. **Moggallāna** spoke to him: “Monk, please stand up. The Buddha has seen you. You are not fit to work along with other monks.”

But that corrupt monk continued to be seated without saying a thing. Ven. **Moggallāna** ordered him for the second time and for the third time. At this Ven. **Moggallāna** took him by the hand, pulled him out of his seat, sent him out of the door and had the door locked.

He went to the Buddha and said: “Sir, I have sent him out. Now the assembly is clean. Please preach the **Pātimokkha** (Disciplinary Rules) to the monks.”

The Buddha said: “**Moggallāna**, it is very strange. Imagine – that corrupt person did not go out until he was taken by his hand and was forcibly led out.”

(Udānapāli – Sonawagga Uposata Sutta)

Chapter Thirty

The Buddha Chases Out A Group Of Noisy Monks

When the Buddha was residing at **Jetavanārāma** in **Sāvatthi**, five hundred Bhikkhus headed by Monk Yasoja visited Jetavana Monastery to see the Buddha. These monks started talking to the resident monks, exchanging friendly pleasantries. They went about their tasks of preparing their belongings, making beds. All the while they were laughing, shouting. Their loud guffawing could be heard. The Buddha heard this. He asked Ven. Ananda: “Who are those people who keep on shouting like a crowd that has gathered at a place where they are fishing?”

Ven. Ananda responded: “Sir, about five hundred Bhikkhus, headed by Ven. Yasoja have come to see you. They are exchanging pleasantries with resident monks. It is that sound that is being heard.”

The Buddha said: “If that is so let them come in here, Ananda.” Those monks came to the presence of the Buddha and worshipped Him. The Buddha spoke to them: “Monks, why did

you keep on shouting, laughing, guffawing like a crowd of fishermen, and hardly like a gathering of monks?"

Ven. Yasoja replied: "These monks travelled a long distance to see you. But when they started exchanging pleasantries with the resident monks they had forgotten that they were here next to where you resided."

The Buddha responded: "Monks, I am not prepared to receive you. I do not wish to talk to you. You can leave this place." The five hundred monks picked up their robes and alms-bowls, accepted their fault and left without a word.

They left **Sāvatthi** immediately, travelled to Vajji and spent the rainy season in cells thatched with leaves, on the bank of the **River Vaggumudā**. Ven. Yasoja addressed the monks: "Just consider, because our discipline – our restraint – had waned the Buddha chased us out. He did that because of His compassion and kindness for us. From now on we must behave in a manner that the Buddha will approve." All the monks agreed. During the rainy season all the monks acquired the three-fold Higher Knowledge (**Te-vijjā**).

The Buddha resided at **Sāvatthi** as long as He wished and then set out for a sojourn in the city of **Visālā**. While residing at **Kūtāgara** Monastery in the forest near the city of Vesali, He examined the fortunes of the monks who went to the banks of Vaggamuda. He found that they were acquiring the monastic discipline well. The Buddha asked Ven. Ananda to keep those monks informed that the Buddha was now quite keen to see the monks from Vaggumuda. The five hundred monks, who had attained Sainthood by that time, were quite happy

to hear it. They took up their robes and alms-bowls, vanished from the banks of River Vaggumuda, and appeared in the presence of the Buddha. Praising those monks who had been earlier chased out by the Buddha, the Enlightened One spoke thus: "Those who have conquered the spike of passion and defilements, and have overcome the bonds and tortures, remain unshaken like a rock." ("**Yassajito kāmakaṇṭhako akkoso ca vadhaca bandhanañ ca**. **Pabbato viya so ṭhito anejo – sukha dukkhesu navedhati sa bhikkhu**.)

(Udānapāli – Nandana Vagga – Yasoja Sutta)

Chapter Thirty–One

The Buddha Refuses To Accept The Medicinal Broth Prepared By Venerable Ananda

The Buddha was sojourning in various villages and market towns, and eventually arrived at Veluvana Monastery in **Kalandaka Nivāpa** in Rajagaha. There He was afflicted with a stomach disorder. Ven. Ananda knew that on earlier occasions when the Buddha had this disorder, He recovered when he took the medicinal broth made out of three varieties of grains. The grains are rice, sesame seed and green gram. Knowing this, Ven. Ananda got these three varieties from a home and, using equal shares of the three varieties of grain, prepared a broth himself. He offered the Buddha the broth he himself prepared.

The Buddha: "Ananda, Where did you get this broth?"

Ven. Ananda: I prepared it myself, obtaining rice, sesame seed and green gram."

The Buddha: "Ananda, what you did was improper. It is wrong and unsuitable. It is not befitting a monk. I took my meals off golden plates, prepared with fragrant rice and tasty curries. I gave up all that and became a monk. I did not become a monk to prepare my own meals. Nor did I become a monk to get someone to cook my meals." So saying, He refused the medicinal broth prepared by Ven. Ananda. He stipulated that preparing one's own meals is not something a monk should do. He made this a Law of Discipline.

(Mahā Vaggapāli – Abbyuvara Bhānavāraṃ)

Chapter Thirty–Two

Venerable Ananda Chants Protective Chants To Quell Vesali City Disaster

In the afternoon the Buddha was seated near the gateway to the city. He addressed Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, study this Ratana Sutta (the Sermon of the Jewels). Protect the three-fold fortresses of the great city of Vesali. With that, eradicate the harm done by demons."

Ven. Ananda learnt the Sermon, filled the Buddha's alms-bowl with protective water and sat at the gateway of the city. Ven. Ananda contemplated the various births of the Buddha since he received confirmation from Buddha **Dīpankara**. Ven.

Ananda reflected upon the Perfections fulfilled by the Buddha. He recalled the sacrifices made by the Aspirant Buddha. Next He contemplated the conception of Prince **Siddhārtha** and his birth at Lumbini Pleasure Park. He recalled the twenty-nine years of Prince **Siddhārtha's** life in the palace and his renunciation. He reflected upon the six years of austerity and how Ascetic **Siddhārtha** attained Buddhahood, defeating the forces of **Māra** (Death). He contemplated the virtues of the Buddha. After that he entered the city and walked around the three-fortress walls chanting the Protective Chants throughout the night.

Ven. Ananda chanted the phrase "**Yaṃ kiñci**" in the **Ratana Sutta** (the Sermon of the Jewels). Because of the power and the efficacy of the phrase, the moment he chanted those words and sprinkled water, the demons who were touched by the water started fleeing. Those who were afflicted became totally cured at the touch of the water. Those who recovered thronged round Ven. Ananda. The demons ran away, toppling whatever there was in their path as they fled. This way, the danger from demons disappeared.

When the demons were gone diseases too disappeared. The people prepared a decorated assembly hall with a special seat in the centre for the Buddha. The retinue of five hundred monks sat around the seat of the Buddha. Licchavi royals too assembled. The chief of gods too was present. Ven. Ananda walked about the city chanting the protective chants. Those people who had regained their health due to the efficacy of the chanting thronged around Ven. Ananda. Surrounded by them Ven. Ananda went to see the Buddha.

The Buddha preached the Ratana Sutta to those who were assembled. The Buddha continued to chant it for one whole week. Seeing that all calamities were over the Buddha kept the Licchavi royals informed of it.

(Saddharmaratnāwaliya)

Chapter Thirty–Three

Venerable Ananda Gets Water From A Covered Well

The Buddha, while on a sojourn with a retinue of monks in the kingdom of the Mallas, visited the Brahmin village called **Thūna**. The moment they heard that the Buddha had arrived in their village with a vast retinue of monks, the Brahmins of the village said: "We will not allow these shaven-headed monks to drink from our wells."

So saying, they filled the public well with grass and straw. The Buddha, after walking a long distance, came close to that well and sat under a tree. Seated there the Buddha said: "Ananda, fetch me some water to drink."

Ven. Ananda said: "Sir, the Brahmins of this village, hearing that we were coming, have filled the well with grass and straw."

The Buddha said: "All right, Ananda, fetch me some water from that well." For the second time Ven. Ananda explained

what the Brahmins had done to the well. For the third time too the Buddha said: "All right, Ananda, go and fetch me some water from that well."

When He insisted, Ven. Ananda went to the well with the alms-bowl. Lo and behold, the well that had been filled with grass and straw was totally filled with water – in fact, it was brimming over!

Ven. Ananda said the miraculous powers of the Enlightened One are truly amazing, astonishing, stunning.

> **"Acchariyaṃ bhante, abbhutaṃ bhante tathāgatassa, mahiddhikatā, mahānubhāvatā."**

So saying, Ven. Ananda filled the bowl with water and offered it to the Buddha, saying:

> "O Blessed One, please drink this water; O the Well-Established One, please drink the water." **Pivatu bhagavā pānīyaṃ**. **Pivatu sugato pāniyaṃ**.

(Udāna Pali – Chulla Vagga – Upadāna Pāli)

Chapter Thirty–Four

Venerable Ananda Prevents Questioning Of The Ailing Buddha

Once, when the Buddha was residing at **Nigrodārāma** in Kapilavatthu, He became slightly indisposed. Immediately

after He recovered a little, the Sakya King **Mahānama** visited Him. Seated to one side, the king said: "Sir, once when you preached a Sermon sometime ago, you said that the person who is capable of keeping his mind concentrated, is a wise one. You also said that those who are not able to concentrate lack wisdom (**samāhitassa ñanaṃ na asamā hitasa**). I remember this. O Sir, what comes first – does trance come first, and wisdom come second? Or on the other hand, does wisdom come first, and trance second?"

Ven. Ananda overheard this. He said: "O **Mahānama**, the Buddha has been ailing lately. He is recovering now. You asked a very profound question. It is not proper to exhaust Him by getting Him to answer such questions. Do come round. I will answer that question."

So saying, Ven. Ananda took King **Mahānama** by his hand, took him aside and answered his question.

(Anguttara Nikāya – Tika Nipātaya)

Chapter Thirty–Five

Venerable Ananda Preaches The Doctrine On Behalf Of The Buddha

When the Buddha was residing at **Nigrodhārama** in Kapilavatthu, the **Sākyas** constructed a new assembly hall. They invited the Buddha to open it. The Buddha accepted the in-

vitation. The **Sākyas** received the Buddha and the monks, washed their feet and led them into the Assembly Hall.

The Buddha was offered the special seat prepared at the centre of the Hall. They got the other monks to sit on either side of the Buddha. The **Sākyas** too washed their feet and entered the Hall, sat on one side of the Hall, and talked to the Buddha. The Buddha entertained the **Sākyas** with a pleasant conversation and called Ven. Ananda. He said: "Ananda, my back is aching. Therefore, I will rest a little." (**Piṭṭhiṃ me agilāyati**. **Tamahaṃ āyamissā mi ti**.)

The Buddha folded His outer robe four-fold, spread it on the ground and lay down on it in the 'lion-style'. Ven. Ananda preached the Dhamma to the **Sākyas** headed by the **Sākya** King **Mahānāma**. The Buddha listened to his sermon. At the end of the sermon the Buddha spoke to Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, you preached the Dhamma exceedingly well."

Chapter Thirty–Six

Venerable Ananda Preaches The Doctrine On Behalf Of The Buddha

Once, the Buddha resided at **Ghositārāma** in the city of Kosambiya. At that time the wandering monk, known as Sandaka, lived in the cave called Pulila with a retinue of five hundred wandering ascetics. One evening, Ven. Ananda, with a retinue of monks, visited the dwelling place of the wandering Ascetic Sandaka and his followers.

When Ven. Ananda visited that area the ascetics were talking at the top of their voices, bantering, laughing and indulging in small-talk. Seeing Ven. Ananda approaching, Wandering Ascetic Sandaka addressed his followers:

> "Brothers, be silent. Do not shout. Do not speak out loud. I see Ven. Ananda, a disciple of the Buddha, approaching with some of his followers. Ven. Ananda is a very disciplined, subdued person. He likes quietness and silence. He extols the virtues of being calm and quiet. Therefore, when he comes no one should shout or whisper or talk aloud."

Sandaka advised his followers.

Hearing that, the wandering Ascetics were totally silent. When Ven. Ananda arrived Sandaka walked towards him and received him cordially. Ven. Ananda was given a seat. The wandering Ascetic Sandaka was delighted by the pleasant Dhamma sermon of Ven. Ananda. Sandaka requested his disciples to follow the Buddha, who was Ven. Ananda's Teacher.

Chapter Thirty–Seven

King Kosala Praises Venerable Ananda

On one occasion when the Buddha was residing at Jetavana Monastery Ven. Ananda went out on his alms round. In the afternoon, he went over to **Pūrvārāma**. King Kosala, mounted

on his elephant "Ekapundarika", saw Ven. Ananda in the distance when he was on his way to **Pūrvārāma**.

The king asked his Prime Minister Siriwardene whether that monk was Ven. Ananda. The Prime Minister replied: "Yes, that is Ven. Ananda." The king sent a royal messenger to meet Ven. Ananda and requested him to kindly stay just for one moment if the Venerable was not in a particular hurry.

The messenger took the king's word to Ven. Ananda. Ven. Ananda accepted the king's request in silence, and stopped. The king alighted from the elephant, walked over to Ven. Ananda, and worshipped him. He then asked the monk to come over to the River Aciravati, if he was not particularly busy.

Ven. Ananda went to the River Aciravati as invited, and sat under a tree. The king went as far as he could go on his elephant, walked the rest of the distance, came to Ven. Ananda and worshipped him. The king spread the carpet used for the elephant-ride and asked Ven. Ananda to sit on it. Ven. Ananda said that it was all right for him as it was, but asked the king to sit on the carpet.

Next, King Kosala put several questions to Ven. Ananda. The king was exceedingly happy about the philosophic replies given to those by Ven. Ananda. The king said:

> "Ven. Ananda, if it is all right for you to accept a noble elephant I will gladly offer you one. If it is proper for you to accept a high-bred horse I will give you one. If it is correct for you to accept the offer of a village I will give you a

> village. But, I know that they are unacceptable. Therefore, I will offer you this priceless cloth known as *bahitika*, sixteen cubits in length and eight cubits in width, and presented to me by King Ajasatta."

Ven. Ananda replied: "O Great King I have the three-fold robes. Therefore, I do not need that cloth." The king spoke this way: "Ven. Sir, when it rains in the mountains in the upper reaches this River Aciravati floods and overflows. In the same way make your three-fold robes out of this cloth. You can give your old robes to someone else. Therefore, please accept this cloth." Ven. Ananda accepted it as requested by the king.

After the king left Ven. Ananda narrated the whole story to the Buddha and offered it to the Buddha. The Buddha, addressing the monks, spoke this way:

> "O Monks, it was most profitable for King Kosala to be able to see Ven. Ananda. It is a matter of high profit for King Kosala to be able to associate with Ven. Ananda."
>
> **Lābhā bhikkhave rañño pasenadissa Kosalassa, suladdham lābhā bhikkhave, Rañño pasenadissa Kosalassa yaṃ rājā pasenadi Kosalo labhati, Ānandaṃ dassanāya. Labhati payurupāsanāyāti**

Chapter Thirty–Eight

The Buddha Attends A Sick Monk With Venerable Ananda

One day, the Buddha was walking along examining the residences of the monks with Ven. Ananda attending Him. In the inspection tour they came upon a monk who was lying on his own body waste, suffering from an acute stomach ache.

The Buddha: What is troubling you?

The monk: My stomach aches – I cannot bear up.

The Buddha: Is there no one to attend to you?

The monk: No, Sir.

The Buddha: Why don't they help you?

The monk: I did not help others when they fell ill. That may be the reason.

The Buddha: Ananda, please come here. Please bring water to bathe this monk.

Ven. Ananda brought a vessel of water. The Buddha washed the monk who was lying on his own body-waste. Ven. Ananda washed him, rubbing his body. The Buddha took him by the hand. Ven. Ananda took him by his feet. Two of them together put the monk on another bed. Necessary medical attention was provided. Because of this the Buddha had all the monks in the monastery assembled. Addressing the assem-

bled monks the Buddha spoke thus: "Is there a sick monk in any of these rooms?"

Monks: Sir, there is a sick monk in one of the rooms.

The Buddha: What is ailing him?

Monks: A stomach-ache.

The Buddha: Is there anyone to attend upon him?

Monks: No, Sir.

The Buddha: How is that?

Monks: Sir, that monk never even looked at a sick monk. Because of that there is no one to look after him when he is sick.

The Buddha: Monks, you monks do not have a mother, or a father. There is no one else responsible for you. Monks do not have guardians. Therefore, monks must help each other. When one monk falls ill others must get together and attend upon him. If that is not done who else would help the monks? If that is not done, whose help can they get? O Monks, if someone attends upon me he has to attend upon the sick. (**Yo bhikkhave maṃ upaṭṭhaheyya**, **so gilānaṃ upaṭṭhaheyya**.)

Chapter Thirty–Nine

Preparing Robes Under The Instructions Of The Buddha

The retinue of the Buddha, who is the "Monarch of the Dhamma", is the Order of Monks. In contemporary India men of religion – ascetics, hermits, etc. – wore robes made of leopard's skin, barks, animal-hair and various other materials. The Buddha did not promulgate any law about robes until the right moment arrived. Monks started wearing robes made of uncut cloth and robes of stained-hue. People started finding fault with the monks, saying: "The monks who are the sons of Sakya have started wearing clothes like sensuous laymen."

One day, when the Buddha was on His way to the Dakkhinagiri area from Rajagaha, He noticed the stretch of paddy-fields called "Maghadha Kethu" (the stretch of Magadha paddy-fields). He observed how a large area was delimited by large ridges which were long and wide, and how inside that large enclosure there were small enclosures, delimited by smaller ridges. Seeing this He said to Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, order the monks to cut the cloth for their robes in the manner ridges are built in that stretch of paddy-fields."

Accordingly, Ven. Ananda trained the monks to cut the cloth for the robes with large enclosures, cross enclosures, large spaces, small spaces, branches, etc. The system initiated by Ven. Ananda to prepare robes spread among all the monks.

The Buddha praised Ven. Ananda as a great genius for planning out the robes of monks as a methodical wearing item.

Praising Ven. Ananda the Buddha said: "Ven. Ananda is a man of wisdom. He is a great genius." ("**Pandito bhikkhave Ānando**. **Mahā paññо bhikkhave Ānando**.)

It is 2,500 years since the cut of the robe was planned according to the pattern in which a field had been laid out. The only group in the world continuing that pattern intact with no change, to date, is the order of Buddhist monks of the Theravada school.

Chapter Forty

The Buddha Shows A Serpent To Venerable Ananda

A peasant in an area close to the city of Savatthi was busy ploughing his field. In the previous night a band of robbers had broken into the house of an affluent person in the city, had stolen much gold and other objects. One robber in the band took a bundle of one-thousand gold coins, unknown to the others, and hid it in his waist band. The robbers shared the booty and walked along that peasant's field. The stolen bundle of thousand gold coins had fallen on the ridge of the field, unknown to the robber who stole it from the other members of the gang.

When the Buddha contemplated the world in the morning with His compassionate eye, He saw the innocent farmer. The Buddha saw with His divine eye that the innocent farmer would be charged for a theft he did not commit, and that he would be sentenced to death if the Buddha did not intervene.

Only the Word of the Buddha would be accepted. The Buddha also knew that the farmer had the potentiality to achieve advanced spiritual progress. That was why He decided to go to that field early in the morning. Accordingly, the Buddha visited the field in the company of Ven. Ananda.

The farmer saw the Buddha and Ven. Ananda visiting his field. He worshipped the Buddha and Ven. Ananda, and went back to his work in the field. The Buddha did not tell him anything. He addressed Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, please see that serpent." So saying the Buddha pointed to the bundle of gold coins on the ridge of the field. Ven. Ananda went near the bundle, and without saying it was not a serpent but a bag of gold coins, told the Buddha: "Yes, Sir, it is a serpent." After the Buddha and Ven. Ananda left the place the farmer went there with the intention of killing the serpent. When he went to the spot shown by the Buddha, he saw that there was a bundle of gold coins. He took it, kept it close to where he was ploughing, and went on with his task.

The next day the owners of the house that had been broken into, started looking for thieves who stole their wealth. They kept on following the foot-prints of the thieves. They traced the foot-prints to that field. There they found the bag of gold coins. They arrested the farmer. They took the bundle of gold coins and the farmer and lodged a complaint before the king. The king's men took the farmer away, torturing him. He was being led to the place where criminals were executed. As he was being led away the farmer, as if he were repeating a mantra kept on repeating: "Ananda, did you see the serpent? Ananda, did you see the serpent?" The king's men were puz-

zled why this man should keep on repeating the names of the Buddha and Ven. Ananda. The king was informed about this.

He then summoned the farmer and asked him about it. The farmer said that the Buddha came to his field that morning with Ven. Ananda, and that they spoke about a serpent. The farmer said that when he went to that spot he found that bundle of gold coins. The king took the farmer to the presence of the Buddha. The king worshipped the Buddha and asked him: "Sir, did you visit this man's field yesterday with Ven. Ananda? Was this farmer ploughing there? Did you show Ven. Ananda a serpent in that field?"

The Buddha replied: "Yes, O great king, I went there. I saw a serpent there and showed it to Ven. Ananda. This farmer took hold of that serpent with no regard for my advice and has got into difficulties. What I referred to as a "serpent" was the bundle of gold coins. Money is like a serpent. Many people get into difficulties and come to grief because of money. This man is not a thief. He is innocent. But because he touched a bundle of gold coins which was a stolen thing belonging to others he was reduced to this state." The Buddha delivered a sermon about the incident. The farmer was freed on the evidence of the Buddha. Besides, the farmer attained Stream-winner status (**Sotāpatti**).

Chapter Forty–One

Venerable Ananda Advises Venerable Vangisa

Once, when he was residing at Jetavana Monastery in Savatthi, Ven. Ananda went on his alms-round. Ven. Vangisa came behind him on his alms-round. Ven. Vangisa saw a beautiful young woman. He thought well of her appearance and shape. An erotic feeling arose within him. Since he was a monk who entered the order entirely because of his devotion, his ways were direct and open. Therefore he informed Ven. Ananda of the passion that arose within him.

> **Kāmarāgena dayihāmi – Cittaṃ me pari dayihati**
> **Sādhu nibbāpanaṃ bruhi – Anukampāya Gotama**.
>
> My body is aflame with passion. My mind is burning altogether. Ven. Gotama, please let me know how I could quench this fire."

Ven. Ananda said: "Vangisa, your mind burns because you cannot know the reality – the true state of things. Give up the impressions, good, beautiful and auspicious, which cause passion. Consider all formations as impermanent, and sorrow-fraught. Do not think of those as a soul or self. Quench the great fire of passion that keeps on burning people. Turn your mind to the Meditation on Impurities. Keep your mind in a trance. Meditate on the Nature of the Body, and increase your disillusionment. Develop insight meditation and discard your pride." Ven. Ananda advised him in that way.

Chapter Forty–Two

Venerable Ananda Helps A Brahmin

The Buddha resided in Benares for a long while and went for a sojourn in an area called Andakavinda with a retinue of 1,250 bhikkhus. At that time the people in villages and market towns followed the Buddha and His retinue of monks with cart-loads of such provisions as rice, salt, oil, so that they would be able to offer alms to the Buddha and the monks the moment there was an opportunity.

About five hundred beggars, too, followed them. The Buddha continued along the road to Andakavinda and finally arrived there. One affluent Brahmin waited for over two months to offer alms to the Buddha and the monks, but was still unable to get an appointment. He decided that he should look for dishes not included in the usual alms offers. When he kept on exploring what dishes had not been offered, he found that no one had given gruel, bee's honey and honey-combs.

He met Ven. Ananda and requested him to ask the Buddha if the Enlightened One would accept the alms offer of gruel, bee's honey and honey-combs. Ven. Ananda informed the Buddha of the Brahmin's request. The Buddha said that He would accept the offer. The Brahmin offered gruel, bee's honey and honey-combs to the Buddha and the monks.

At the end of the alms-offering the Buddha preached a Sermon indicating ten advantages that accrue from taking gruel. These are the ten advantages: When you take gruel you become long-lived; your complexion improves; you become

healthy; you become strong; your wisdom and intelligence improve; the gruel quenches hunger; quells thirst; balances the wind element in the body; cleanses the bowels and enables the digestion of undigested particles of food."

Chapter Forty–Three

Venerable Ananda Ordains A Beggar

One day, Ven. Ananda saw a little urchin wearing a rag, with a broken vessel in hand, going about begging. Ven. Ananda asked him: "Child, is it not better for you to become a monk, giving up begging?" The urchin replied: "Ven. Sir, I would like to be ordained. But who would ordain people like us?" Ven. Ananda said: "To be ordained it does not matter whether a person is rich or poor. What is essential is only the consent of the person. If you would like to be ordained I will certainly ordain you.

So saying, Ven. Ananda took him along to the monastery, bathed the urchin himself, taught him the objects of meditation to remove obstacles to the attainment of Sainthood, and ordained him.

He washed the rag that was worn by the urchin, and tried to find out whether it could be put to some use, like draining water. He found that it could not be used in any way. Therefore, he placed that rag along with his begging vessel on the branch of a tree. The way he placed those showed that Ven. Ananda was not quite certain how things would turn out.

That urchin, because he was ordained belatedly, consumed what was offered to the Buddha, acquired flesh and blood and started wearing magnificent robes that became available due to the power of the Buddha. Eventually, he became bored with the life at the monastery. He thought: "When one is not attached to the Order, what is given by devotees is of no use. As my rag is still there I will give up robes."

He took the rag in his hand and found that his thoughts were as coarse as his rag. He addressed himself. "You are a shameless person. Did you think that you could give up the Buddha's Dispensation, which gives you fine robes, and go around begging, taking this broken vessel in hand instead of the alms-bowl? When you were ordained you discarded the rag and the broken vessel. What if both of those had been destroyed at that time? What would you have done then? You seem totally shameless."

He advised himself this way, as if someone else was advising him. When he kept on advising himself his disillusionment with the Dispensation too disappeared. He kept the rag and, leaving the broken begging vessel there by itself, returned to the monastery.

On several occasions he repeated this process. He would go to the place where the rag was placed, talk to himself, advising himself and, changing his mind, would come back to the monastery. The monks would ask him occasionally where he was going. When asked he would say: I went to my teacher to obtain his advice." This way, learning the absorption to the Dispensation from the rag and the broken vessel, he developed insight and, in a few days, became an Arahant.

When he became an Arahant his journey in the cycle of births came to an end. Along with it his journey to the rag also ended. Monks would ask him: "Friend, don't you go to see the teacher these days?" The monk would reply: "When there was a reason I would go. But now that reason is gone." The monks went to the Buddha and informed Him thus: "Sir, Elder Pilotika says that he is an Arahant." The Buddha listened and responded: "Yes, monks, when the minds of my sons are defiled and blemished, the wanderings in **saṃsāra** increase. Now he is devoid of blemishes, has travelled in **saṃsāra**, has become diminished. His walk, too, stopped in the same manner."

The Buddha then preached a Sermon: "A disciplined horse avoids weapons aimed at it. In the same way, those who practise the rules of monkhood do not allow insults and abuses to affect them. Even if some kammic forces affect them during this birth they avoid them in the next birth. Anyone who eradicates an evil thought through a sense of shame will be like this monk Pilotika. A good horse may, at one point, get attacked by a weapon. But next time he will make an effort to avoid it. In the same way, you too must make an effort. You must develop a disillusionment about the cycle of births. You must discard all the sufferings you experienced in your wanderings through samsara, just as Ven. Pilotika gave up his sufferings by concentrating on the rag and the broken begging vessel. You must, in the same way, concentrate on the sufferings you faced during the cycle of birth."

Chapter Forty–Four

Venerable Ananda Helps Venerable Anuruddha To Prepare His Robe

Ven. Anuruddha was a strict adherent of the practice of wearing robes made of cemetery shrouds and discarded clothes. One day, Ven. Anuruddha found that his robe was worn out and thread-bare. He tried to find cloth for a robe in garbage dumps and thirty-three places of that type.

The wife of his third previous life had been reborn in the Tavatimsa Heaven as celestial maiden Jalini. She saw how this monk who enjoyed tremendous luxury in that previous birth, was now going about looking for rags. She selected three divine cloths, each thirteen cubits in length and four cubits in width. She thought: "If I presented these in this form itself, he would not accept them because of his austerity." She then placed the cloths in a garbage heap in which the monk would be rummaging for rags, making only the edge appear.

The monk, searching for rags along that street, saw only the edge of the divine cloths. He kept on pulling it and saw the divine cloths. He decided that they were in keeping with his principal of using only discarded cloths.

On the day appointed for the making of robes the Buddha went to this monastery with a retinue of five hundred monks. Eighty principal disciples were also there. Ven. Maha Kassapa assumed the position of the chief monk for the ritual of preparing robes. Ven. Sariputta was seated in the centre.

Ven. Ananda sat at the end. Beyond him the other monks sat. Those who were seated at the outer edge would weave the threads. The Buddha did not stay inactive as He was the All Enlightened One. He would thread the needles. The monks assigned to stitch – Ven. Maha Kassapa, Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Ananda – went on sewing the robes. If there were certain things needed for the sewing of the robes Ven. Maha Moggallana would look after those needs. The divine damsel who donated the cloths for the robes entered the village and exulted that "for the preparation of the robes for Ven. Anuruddha, the Buddha and the eighty great disciples arrived, with their constant retinue of five hundred monks."

Chapter Forty–Five

Ānanda Bodhi

Once, the Buddha resided at Savatthi. After a while He traveled to various settlements. At the time he was away from Savatthi, many devotees came to the monastery with flowers, incense, etc., and not seeing the Buddha, they were sorely distressed. Not knowing any other place where these things could be offered, they heaped whatever they brought along near the monastery, and went away.

Guild leader **Anāthapiṇḍika** and many other devotees, seeing these discarded flowers, were totally overcome with emotion. They felt that they should have an object that could be venerated like the Buddha whenever they could not see the Buddha.

After discussing the matter among themselves, they went to the monastery on one occasion when the Buddha was present there. They were exceedingly happy to see the Buddha.

Next, they visited Ven. Ananda, and spoke to him thus: "Venerable Sir, we were not able to see the Buddha all these days. There was no opportunity for us to make offerings to Him. This made us sorely distressed. It is the nature of the Buddha to travel about for the well-being of many. Please ask the Buddha to grant us something to worship and make offerings to, when the Buddha is not at the monastery." Ven. Ananda went to the Buddha and informed Him of this situation. He asked the Buddha: "Venerable Sir, what are the objects that should be worshipped in place of you, assuming that we see you in them?"

The Buddha replied: "Ananda, objects of worship are threefold, namely, **sāririka**, **uddesika and pāribhogika**. Of these **sāririka** (bodily relics) are objects of the Buddha's body. **Uddesika** objects are the Buddha's Doctrine, and images that look like the Buddha. **Pāribhogika** objects are those used by the Buddha. The Buddha's alms-bowl. The Bodhi Tree that sheltered Him. Therefore, if you bring a sapling from the sacred Bodhi Tree, plant it here at Jetavana Monastery, and honour and worship it as if you were seeing me in it – that is equivalent to honouring and respecting me personally."

Ven. Ananda told this to King Kosala and all those who mattered. Immediately, he had a hole dug at the entrance to Jetavana Monastery, and had the site decorated. He went to Ven. Moggallana and said: "Venerable Sir, could you please go to the sacred Bodhi Tree and bring back a sapling for us?"

At that time Ven. Moggallana resolved that all those present there should see him going, and bringing back a sapling of the Tree. After that resolve he rose into the sky and went to the site of the Bodhi Tree, bringing a sapling back, without allowing it to hit the ground. He returned instantly through the sky, alighted on the ground and handed over the sapling to Ven. Ananda.

Ven. Ananda received it with both hands and handed it over to King Kosala. Ven. Ananda said to the king: "O great King, plant this with your own hands."

The king received it in a jewel-casket, kept it on his head, circled the hole three times with his right-hand side turned to the site, and thought thus: "I cannot be sure of being king always. Therefore, I do not know whether any other king succeeding me will have the same affection for this tree as I have. But guild leaders are like solid earth. I will get guild leader Anathapindika to plant this."

With that thought he handed it over to the guild leader, saying: "Guild leader, please plant this with your own hands." At that stage they had a golden bowl, worth one hundred thousand, filled with fragrant mud, with a hole made at its bottom, and the guild leader placed the Bo sapling in the fragrant mud.

Instantly, while all the people looked on, the plant rose up, piercing the earth like a celestial serpent. The plant had a large leaf and a tender leaf. This plant which arose due to the power of the Buddha and the arahants, and the devotion of the king and the guild leader, kept on growing up with a large trunk and branches spreading in all directions. Its

leaves were like emeralds. The tender leaves resembled corals, and instantly it became comely with reddened fruits. All the people in and around the city of Savatthi were overjoyed by this miracle. They continued to celebrate this event.

Kings and influential men and women of Savatthi built a wall around this Bodhi Tree. Since the Bodhi Tree was planted at the request of Ven. Ananda, it was called the Ananda Bodhi Tree. Devotees were assigned to make offerings to the Bodhi Tree each day.

Ven. Ananda saw the Buddha, worshipped him and said: “Venerable Sir, you need not declare your greatness from today on. From today on, this Ananda Bodhi Tree will delight the whole world and will be of service to the whole of mankind. The masses made offerings to this Ananda Bodhi Tree. Venerable Sir, you must consecrate this Bodhi Tree by sitting at the foot of it, contemplating just as you did when you sat under the sacred Bodhi Tree and attained Enlightenment.”

The Buddha sat down under the Ananda Bodhi Tree, entered into deep meditation, and spent one whole night there in that posture. From that day on, even when the Buddha was not at Jetavana Monastery, it was as if the Buddha were permanently present there. Offerings continued to be made to the Ananda Bodhi Tree at the rate of one hundred thousand.

Chapter Forty–Six

Venerable Ananda Requests The Buddha To Go To Another Village

Magandhi was frustrated that she could not get anything done. She decided that she would do something to the Buddha Himself. Determined that way, she bribed the people of the city and told them to get their urchins to stand in various places and to scold and abuse the Buddha when He came to the city for the alms-round, and so to chase him out. Accepting that assignment, those misbelievers who were not happy with the Three Jewels saw the Buddha entering the city on His alms-round and started abusing Him. They scolded Him and insulted Him using the ten-fold abusive terms.

They said: "You are a thief. You are a fool. You are an idiot. You are a camel. You are an animal. You are a beast. You will never gain a pleasant place. You will get only woeful states."

Ven. Ananda, hearing these abusive words, informed the Buddha this way: "Sir, people of this city have no devotion to the Three Jewels. They scold, insult and abuse. Let us please leave this place and go to some other city."

The Buddha listened to him and asked: If in this city that we will go to, people started insulting us, where will we go?" Ven. Ananda said: "If they too are equally abusive we will go to another city."

The Buddha spoke thus: "Ananda, that way of going from one city to another is not the proper thing to do. If an offence has

happened in one place we will put it right there. We will go to another place only after the matter has been fully settled here."

Next, He asked Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, who are those who insult us?" Ven. Ananda replied: "Sir, all the people, starting from servants and labourers, are insulting us."

Hearing this, the Buddha said: "I am like an elephant who has entered the battle ground. The elephant in the battle ground tolerates arrows from all four directions. I am prepared to forgive the insults of unvirtuous people."

The Buddha continued: "Ananda, do not worry. They will insult for about seven days. On the eighth day they will be silent like dumb people. If there is an offence against the Buddha it will not last more than seven days."

Chapter Forty–Seven

Venerable Ananda Is Saddened That The Buddha Has Grown Old

The Buddha resided at **Pūrvārāma** built by Vishaka. One day when it was extremely cold the Buddha had a seat prepared for Himself in the open air outside the monastery. He sat in it and adjusted the robe to uncover his back so that the sun's rays fell on His back. In this way He basked in the sun.

Ven. Ananda came there and worshipped Him, stroking the Buddha's back. Ven. Ananda remarked: "O Sir, it is quite strange. In earlier days your complexion was very clear. It really gleamed then. Now it is changed. Earlier, the skin was very smooth. Now, little wrinkles have begun to appear. Your body was straight earlier. Now it is beginning to bend. Your organs, eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the body have now changed from those days. They do not look the same today."

The Buddha then said: "Yes, you are right, Ananda. It is natural that one gets old when youth ends. Natural too that one gets sick when good health is gone. It is natural that death should occur when life ends. In those days my skin was very smooth. It was very clear. The body that was upright is now bent. My sense organs, eyes, ears, nose, are now weak."

Chapter Forty–Eight

Venerable Ananda Says Dependent Origination Is Quite Easy

The Buddha resided at one time in the market town of Kammasa damma in the country of Kurus. Then one day, Ven. Ananda went to the Buddha, worshipped Him and stood to one side. Addressing the Buddha, he said: "Sir, it is very strange. It is unbelievable. This Teaching of Dependent Origination (**paṭicca samuppāda**) seems deep and difficult for all. But for me, it is quite easy. I can understand it well and clearly."

The Buddha said: "O Ananda, do not say such things. This Dependent Origination (**paṭicca samuppāda** Dhamma) is quite deep and profound. As they cannot comprehend this Doctrine all the people in this world are like a spool of thread nibbled by mice, or else like birds' nests built of all kinds of bits and pieces, or else they are like a rope woven out of various strands of grasses. They are incapable of finding out the beginning or the end of things, and are confused. They remain glued to the present existence, full of wrong views, incapable of getting over the sufferings of the woeful states and the sufferings of the cycle of existence," the Buddha said, indicating just how profound Dependent Origination (**paṭicca samuppāda**) was.

Chapter Forty–Nine

The Buddha Teaches 'Object Meditation' To Venerable Ananda

The Buddha spoke thus to Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, Brahmin Parasariya teaches a system of meditation to his disciples, advocating that one must not look at visual objects with one's eyes and one should not listen to sounds with one's ears. In terms of that the blind person who cannot see and the deaf person who cannot hear, are practitioners of object meditation. But, the object meditation I teach is the highest and it is different."

Then Ven. Ananda requested the Buddha to explain to him the form of object meditation advocated by the Buddha.

The Buddha explained: "A monk ordained by my Dispensation is happy seeing visual objects. Or else he will feel unhappy seeing a visual object – or else he will have a neutral feeling of being neither happy nor unhappy. The monk becomes aware that he has experienced a happy feeling, an unhappy feeling or a neutral feeling of being neither happy nor unhappy. Being thus aware he keeps his mind neutral or unaffected by the impact of the visual object. To keep the mind neutral he contemplates the Three Characteristics (**Tilakkhaṇa**) which are impermanence, suffering and soullessness (**anicca**, **dukkha**, **anatta**). Since the thoughts arise either through liking or disliking, such thoughts tend to fluctuate and to be impermanent. He concentrates his mind on neutral insight.

"A person who possesses eyes opens and closes the eyes instantly. In the same way, the liking or disliking arising from seeing a visual object disappear in a trice.

That kind of insight neutrality established in a mind is described by me as the object meditation relating to visual objects. "In the unparalleled 'object meditation' relating to a sound heard through the ear, a smell experienced through the nose, a taste experienced through the tongue, a touch experienced through the body, and the mental phenomenon experienced through the mind have to be learnt in terms of the 'visual objective' meditation.

If a monk is able to establish in his mind the 'insight neutrality', contemplating as impermanence, suffering and soul-lessness, the likes and dislikes that appear in the mind, through the six sense-objects of visual object, sounds, smells, etc.,

taken in by the six organs – eyes, ears, nose, etc., – that is the 'unparalleled object' meditation advocated by Buddhism.

"O Ananda, if a given monk, seeing a visual object with the eye, hearing a sound through the ear, experiencing a smell through the nose, obtaining a taste through the tongue, feeling a touch through the body, and acquiring an experience through the mind, receives a pleasure, a displeasure or a neutral attitude, if at that the monk becomes ashamed or repelled, that is 'the attitude of the disciple' ('**sekhapatipadā**').

"Ananda, the greatest meditation is 'object meditation'. By teaching this I have done what a compassionate kind teacher should do to his disciples. "Ananda, meditate. Here are trees. Here are empty houses. Meditate. Do not delay. Do not repent later. This is my admonition to you."

"**Etāni Ānanda rukkhamūlāni**, **etāni suññāgārāni jhāyāthānanda**, **mā pamādattha**, **mā pacchāvippaṭisārino ahuvattha**, **ayaṃ vo amhātaṃ anusāsanā**."

Chapter Fifty

Venerable Ananda And Venerable Kassapa

Bhikkhunis liked Ven. Ananda better than Ven. Maha Kassapa. But Ven. Ananda had a high regard for Ven. Maha Kassapa. It was the kind of regard one has for one's teacher. One day, a novice monk wanted to obtain higher ordination from Ven. Maha Kassapa. On this occasion Ven. Maha Kas-

sapa sent word to Ven. Ananda to read the disciplinary rule (**Kamma Vākya**) at the higher ordination. Ven. Ananda refused the invitation because he did not want to mention Ven. Maha Kassapa's name. He sent word saying that he could not pronounce the Disciplinary Regulation (**Kamma Vākya**) because he could not refer to Ven. Maha Kassapa, as he was his teacher. (**Nāham ussāmi therassa nāmaṃ gahetuṃ garu me Thero' iti**). "I cannot speak the name of Ven. Maha Kassapa because he is my teacher."

Chapter Fifty–One

Five Lay Disciples Listen To A Sermon While Venerable Ananda Fans The Buddha

Five lay disciples went to the monastery, keen to listen to a Sermon by the Buddha. They worshipped Him, and stayed to one side. It never occured to the Buddha, "These are royals; these are brahmans; these are wealthy ones; these are poor. I will preach longer to these; I will preach briefly to these."

Since the Dhamma preached by the Buddha does not become rich when it reaches the wealthy, or poor when it reaches the poor, the Dhamma is always of the same quality. Therefore, He preaches in detail, like the celestial river coming down to earth, with due respect to the Dhamma.

Of the five people listening to the Buddha's preaching, one was not very interested in listening to the Dhamma. There-

fore, he slept seated. Another was drawing lines on the floor with his fingers. Another was shaking a branch of a tree nearby. Another was looking at the sky, as if watching the place from where the Sermon emerged. One of them listened to the Sermon without any distraction from the time he first went to listen to the Buddha.

Ven. Ananda was fanning the Buddha at that time. Therefore, he was able to observe how those five listened to the Sermon. He said to the Buddha, "O Sir, you keep on preaching to them like a torrential rain pouring on all the four great islands, without ever thinking there are only five and they are not sufficient. While you are preaching this way, one person is sleeping as if he broke rest last night. Another draws lines on the ground, as if committing the Sermon he heard to memory by writing it on the sand. Another keeps on shaking a branch, like a person who has lost his way in the wilderness, indicating his presence. Another keeps on looking at the sky, as if he were stargazing. Another listens with attention well focused."

Hearing this, the Buddha said, "Ananda, do you know all these people?"

"No, Sir, I do not know them," replied Ananda. The Buddha said, "Listen, one of them who sleeps forgetting that he is listening to the Dhamma, had been born in one hundred births as a serpent, and was sleeping with his head on his coils. At present, too, his fondness for sleep has not diminished. Therefore, my Sermon does not reach his ears."

Ven. Ananda enquired, "Was he born a serpent in five hundred births continuously?"

The Buddha said, "Ananda, this person was sometimes born as a human, sometimes as a deity, and sometimes as a cobra. The number of births he was born a serpent cannot be known even through a Buddha's wisdom. As he was born continuously for five hundred births as a cobra and slept deeply, now, too, he is inclined to sleep."

After explaining why that person slept while listening to the Dhamma, the Buddha said: "The person who draws lines on the ground was an earthworm for five hundred births, and drew lines wherever he went. Today, too, he draws lines according to that habit, and does not listen to the Dhamma. The person who kept on shaking the branch had been born a monkey for five hundred consecutive births. Now, too, he keeps on shaking branches according to his previous habit. Though he hears the sound of the branch shaking, nothing from my Sermon reaches his ear. The Brahmin who keeps on gazing at the sky had been an astronomer for five hundred births consecutively. Due to his star-gazing habit during those births, now, too, he keeps on gazing at the sky. He hears nothing of my Sermon. Since no water reaches the field when the canal is clogged, the canals of action of all those people had become clogged, and the waters of Dhamma did not enter into their fields of ideas. That person who listens to the Dhamma with due attention had been born for five hundred consecutive births as a brahmin, studying the Vedas. Today, too, he listens to the Dhamma with a well-composed mind, like a person learning the Vedic chants."

Ven. Ananda enquired, "The Dhamma you preach is sufficient for anyone listening to it attentively to pierce the outer

skin, inner skin, the flesh, the sinews and bones, and to penetrate to the marrow. Why have these four not listened to the Dhamma with due attention?"

The Buddha asked, "Can all listen to our Dhamma?"

"Why, Sir, is there a reason why one cannot?"

When the Buddha said, "Yes," Ven. Ananda asked why.

The Buddha replied, "These beings have not even heard the name of the Three Gems in hundreds of thousands of æons. As they are not used to it they do not get even a desire to listen to it. In the boundless cycle of existence that cannot be known even by the wisdom of a Buddha, these beings are used only to stories that are not conducive to the bliss of heaven or Nibbana. Therefore, no merit accrues in the theatres and pleasure-grounds they wander about in, singing and dancing. Instead of getting ready to go out and listen to the Dhamma, they spent their days in playing and dancing. They did not even have such a noble thought."

The Buddha further explained why such ideas did not occur. "Ananda, beings do not get such beneficial ideas because of such defilements as passion and ill-will. The end-of-the-world-fire that arises due to the rising of seven suns will burn everything that must be burnt. But, that fire burns only in a specific age. But, there is no time when the fire of passions does not burn. There is, therefore, no fire like passion as it burns without creating smoke, and without leaving charcoal, and burns within the body itself. One is not always caught by demons, pythons and crocodiles. But ill-will catches you as long as it is

not fully eradicated. Therefore, there is nothing like ill-will to catch one firmly, and take one to hell. And again, there is no net like ignorance, as it confuses the mind by spreading over the head. One can see when the rivers and lakes are full of water, and when they are dried up. But one cannot see when the river of craving is full or dried up until it is destroyed by attaining arahanthood. Since it always seems diminished, it can never be filled. This way, there is no river like craving."

At the end of the Sermon the devotee who listened to the preaching attentively attained stream-winning status. The Sermon was also of benefit to some others who were present.

Chapter Fifty–Two

Dialogue Between The Buddha And Venerable Ananda

(From Surangama Sutta in the Chinese Tipitaka)

The Buddha: "Ananda, you and I are both from the same blood-clan. In addition, the two of us live with brotherly affection for one another. I will put some questions to you. You must answer them freely. Why did you take an interest in Buddhism, initially? How were you enamoured of your Buddhist way of life? What made you give up worldly pleasures and your youthful sex desires?"

Ven. Ananda: "My venerable Sir, the first things that attracted me were the thirty-two special characteristics of a supreme being seen in your personality. I saw

those exceptional characteristics within you, like seeing the contents in a transparent crystal casket. They were gleaming and clear. From the day I saw them that way, I kept on thinking about them. I was convinced that those unusual characteristics could not be present in anyone other than a person who had given up all sensual desires. Why is it? When a person is aflame with passion his mind becomes troubled. It gets disturbed. His self-control falls away. He becomes rash. He gets toughened. His sense of shame and fear vanishes. When you indulge in sensual pleasures your blood gets heated. It becomes impure. It gets polluted.

"The gold-hued, variegated rays that emanate from your body could never radiate from the body of an individual who is given to sex desires. This is why I consider you noble. These were the reasons that compelled me to seek to be a disciple of yours – your follower."

The Buddha: "Ananda, it is very good. All those assembled in this hall must know and appreciate why beings endlessly die and are reborn, migrating from one life to another. The reason is that they have not realized the truth about sensation."

Ven. Ananda: "Yes, Sir."

The Buddha: "Ananda, I will put yet another question to you. Please listen to me carefully. You said just now that you became devoted to me by seeing the thirty-two supreme personality characteristics of my body. Who

created the feeling to see them? Who made you feel happy to see them?"

Ven. Ananda: "My eyes and my mind persuaded me to see them. They made me happy seeing them. When my eyes saw them my mind instantly created the feeling of happiness. This prompted my mind to direct me to become one of your disciples. I feel that because of this I will be able to escape the cycle of existence which includes birth and death."

The Buddha: "Ananda, you said just now that your happiness arose in your eye and in your mind. But you would never be able to get rid of your defilements, and your worldly attachments, if you did not have a realistic, pragmatic awareness of the vision of the eye, and the functioning of the mind. It is just like the frustration of the efforts of a king who strives to get rid of thieves and robbers in a city infested with them. He is frustrated in his attempts to destroy them because he cannot know where those evil fellows lurk. The life of human beings, constantly troubled by worldly bonds and attachments, endlessly tortured by various defilements, with their practical wisdom and vision gone awry, devoid of firm beliefs, and being taken hither and thither by ignorance, without any control, is also like that.

"Ananda, let me ask you about your eye and your head. Do you know where they lurk secretly?"

Ven. Ananda: "Sir, of the ten features of a life, the eyes are situated in the front section of the face. Your eyes

which are like blue lotuses, and my eyes are situated that way. Other organs, too, are situated on the outer section of the body. But, only my mind is hidden inside the body." The Buddha (interrupting Ananda): "You are now seated inside the assembly hall. Isn't that so? When you look at the forest grove of Jeta, can you say where the assembly hall is, and where the Jeta forest grove is?"

Ven. Ananda: "Yes, Sir, I can clearly say that. This majestic and quiet assembly hall, and the Jeta grove are both situated in the great attractive park of guild leader Anatha Pindika."

The Buddha: "Ananda, what do you see first – those people who are assembled inside this hall, or the park?"

Ven. Ananda: "Sir, I see you first of all. Next, I see the disciples and others assembled inside the hall. It is only then that I see the grove and the comely park."

The Buddha: "Ananda, it is quite true. Alright, tell me now. When you look at the grove and the park from here, how can you discriminate between the various sights you see? What makes you see them separately?"

Ven. Ananda: "The doors and windows of the assembly hall are wide open. Therefore, I can clearly view from here what is beyond." The Buddha (in the presence of the disciples, stretching His golden-hued hand, the Buddha strokes Ven. Ananda's head, and speaks): "Ananda, you said at first that your mind is within your body. But, if this clear mind is really situated inside your body, you

must, in the first instance, be able to see the inside of your body. But, there is no one who can see the inside of one's body as clearly as one can see the outside of one's body.

If there is no one who can see one's own heart, lungs, intestines, liver and other internal organs, at least one must be able to see how one's nails grow, one's hair grows, and how the heart beats. If the mind is inside the body, how is it that we cannot see them? If the mind cannot see what is inside the body, how can one see it without the body? Therefore, we cannot accept the view that the mind is within the body."

Ven. Ananda: "When I listened to you it occurred to me that my mind must be situated outside my body. It is like a lamp. When a lamp is lit inside a room, it first lights up the room; next, the light spreads to the outside places and the courtyard, through doors and windows. If that were so, how is it that a person cannot see what is inside, and can see what is outside?"

"The mind is like a lamp placed outside a room. Inside it is dark. If one can clearly understand what the mind is, he will have no problem at all. He will have no puzzles and enigmas. He will have the wisdom of a Buddha, and the realization of Truth, like a Buddha."

Chapter Fifty–Three

The Buddha Questions Venerable Ananda

The Buddha preached the Doctrine in a delightful, smooth voice. His Sermons were good at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. Ven. Ananda and other disciples listened to His preachings extremely attentively. They were happy and they praised the Buddha.

But once, Ven. Ananda was not happy with that. He came to the Buddha, worshipped Him, and said: "O Blessed Buddha, you expounded, taking pity on us, the perpetual quality of the Absolute Phenomena which are pure and wondrous. But, I could not fully comprehend what you said. This is how I understood it – 'The six doors of perception cling on to all objects of defilement. When we get release from those clingings, only the independent perceptions remain in the mind and thought processes. They, too, disappear on their own. And, what remains is only the original nature of those mental states. Their disappearance and their reduction continue unabated without one's effort.' Sir, could you please explain this for the benefit of such worldling monks as us, and also for the benefit of the future monks?"

Then the Buddha took a silk handkerchief into His hand, tied a knot in it, showed it to the monks, and asked, "O monks, what is this?"

Ven. Ananda: "Sir, it is a silk handkerchief with a knot in it made by you."

The Buddha (makes another knot): "What is this now?"

Ven. Ananda: "The handkerchief with another knot."

The Buddha (ties another knot. In this way He tied six knots and asked the monks at each turn): "What is this?" "What is this?"

Ven. Ananda: "This is another knot. There are six knots now."

The Buddha: "When I showed you the first knot, Ananda, you said that it was a knot. You said so about the second knot, too. You continued to say so when I showed you all the six knots."

Ven. Ananda: "The handkerchief is a piece of cloth, woven in silk thread. When a knot is tied in it, it is proper to describe it as a knot. Even if a hundred knots are tied in it, it could still be described the same way. Each knot can be described as a knot. But, you made exactly six knots. Sir, why did you describe only the first one as a 'knot'?"

The Buddha: "Ananda, this attractive handkerchief is just one piece of cloth. It is true to say that it has six knots in it. Now, take a closer look at this. This silk handkerchief is one piece of cloth woven with silk threads. It has not changed in any way due to the knots. It has changed only in its external appearance. It is still the handkerchief that existed at the beginning. It has never changed. When I tied it at first, the first knot appeared. When I tied it the second time, the second knot appeared. In this way, six knots appeared in one and the same handkerchief. If

I count backwards from the sixth knot, that sixth knot becomes the first knot. Isn't that so?"

Ven. Ananda: "No, Sir. When you tie knots in the handkerchief one after the other, the last one should be the sixth."

The Buddha: "All right, I accept your view. But, these six knots are not similar to one another. You may try to understand why they are different from one another. Then you will find that all these knots are made in one handkerchief. You cannot change this handkerchief. But, if you like, you can change the shape, form and the nature of these knots. Why can't you change the handkerchief? Because, Ananda, it is one piece of cloth. The real nature of the six organs of perception is also the same. The six doors of perception are like six knots in the original, simple state of mind of people. The difference of these doors of perception is also seen through the wholeness of the mind."

Ven. Ananda: "As long as the knots exist in the handkerchief, various views and arguments are likely to arise about their priority, their shape, etc. But, if in some way the knots are untied, those arguments do not arise. This is because when the knots are untied only the original handkerchief remains."

The Buddha: "Yes, Ananda, indeed, it is so. This is similar to the manner in which the six doors of perception are bound up with the original mind. When all the defilements are gone from the six doors of

perception, the concepts that automatically arise in the exploratory mind disappear. This is because in the mind that is deformed and diseased due to wrong concepts brought in by the doors of perception and deposited in the mind over a long period of time, such defilements as craving, ill-will and passion, continued to grow and take root. Due to these defilements such other views as **sakkāya diṭṭhi**, **vicikicchā**, have also arisen. The false concepts that have continued to grow in association with these doors of perception, life after life, are illusory concepts. They are like an illusory bouquet of flowers that appears in the air to a person with a deformed mind. Though they may resemble the nature of concepts that arise in the original mind, illuminated due to the eradication of defilements, they actually arise in the mind because of its diseased quality.

"This nature is common not only to such internal concepts as death and rebirth, but also to such external phenomena as rivers, hills and valleys. In those disturbed minds that are scattered, bewildered and deformed, even such discriminatory thoughts about the nature of mind and of Nibbana, may become like illusory miraculous and wondrous flowers seen in the sky by a sick mind."

Ven. Ananda: "If, O Blessed One, those automatic concepts (which identify such ideas as male and female) which have the nature of constantly arising and changing, are like the knots in the handkerchief, how can one untie these knots?"

The Buddha (takes the handkerchief, pulls it casually this way and that, and asks): "Can these knots be untied this way?"

Ven. Ananda: 'No, Sir."

The Buddha: I tried to untie these knots in the handkerchief in this casual manner, but to no purpose. I tried other methods, but to no avail. My efforts became futile. Ananda, how can we untie these knots?"

Ven. Ananda: "I will initially try to examine how these knots are tied. I will first try to understand the real nature of these knots. Then I will untie them."

The Buddha: "Quite right, Ananda. That is exactly what should be done to untie these knots. This is just what you should do even about the Doctrine I have taught you. I have taught you that everything occurs in terms of cause and effect. I realized this through my own effort. This knowledge is beneficial both to this world and the next. It is true of all phenomena. Ananda, the Teacher (the Buddha) knows the reality of all phenomena. He can declare it in any manner He wishes. He knows about each drop of water on the sandy banks of the Ganges. The straightness of the pine tree, the crookedness of a thorn-bush, the whiteness of the crane, the ashen colour of the magpie – He knows the reality of such things in terms of cause and effect.

"Therefore, Ananda, if you select any door of perception you prefer, and break asunder all the internal and

external bonds and attachments associated with it, all the misconceptions in the exploratory mind will be eradicated. If you realize that any sense perception or a thought built on it is impermanent and illusory, the tendency to cling onto sensations brought in by various doors of perception will also be eradicated. This way, when you eradicate fully the tendency to be enslaved by your sense organs, only the true, real mental phenomena will remain.

"Ananda, I will ask you yet another question. Can all these six knots in the handkerchief be untied at once?"

Ven. Ananda: 'Not at all, Sir. You tied these knots separately. Therefore, they have to be untied one by one, separately."

The Buddha: "Ananda, the eradication of the bonds of the six sense-perceptions is also similar to this. Of the knots of wrong views, the very first knot that should be untied, that should be eradicated – is the I-ness (the selfishness) found in all human beings. Human beings must initially realize the falsehood and the impermanence of the I-ness (concept of self) within one. When one has realized this fully and comprehensively, his mind becomes bright – glorious – shiny.

"The next knot that should be untied is the knot of one's personal attainment. One must untie that knot, realizing fully, comprehensively, the wrongness and the impermanence of that concept. Once an individual has been able to realize the wrongness and confusion of the 'I'

concept, and the sense of one's personal attainment, one will also realize that they have to be fully and totally eradicated. Then they will not allow those to cling onto one's pure and original mind, and to confuse and disturb one's mind."

Chapter Fifty–Four

The Buddha Passes Away

One day, the Buddha, who was eighty, addressed Ven. Ananda as follows: "Ananda, let us cross the River Hiranyathie, and go to the **Upavattana Sāla** Park of the Malla kings of the city of Kusinara." Ven. Ananda, approving the Buddha's suggestion, said, "Yes, Sir, let us go." At that stage the Buddha, with the vast retinue of monks who were around Him, arrived at **Upavattana Sāla** Park. There, the Buddha, addressing Ven. Ananda, showing him two large Sala trees, said, "Please keep a bed between these two Sala trees."

Ven. Ananda brought along a bed that had been kept in the park for the use of kings. The Buddha lay down on the bed on his right side, with his left leg on his right leg. The whole place looked like a bed decked with flower petals, as the petals of flowers were strewn everywhere.

The Buddha, addressing Ven. Ananda, said thus: "Just see, Ananda, how even these two inanimate **Sāla** trees felicitate me with these strewn flower petals, and scent-laden breezes. Ananda, even though you cannot see, those deities in this

whole area and in the air, offer me flowers and fragrances. Offering me these various material gifts is not the best way to honour me. They are not the proper form of showing me respect. If a given monk, nun, male lay devotee or a female lay devotee were to practise the virtues, if they follow a moral way of life, such a person is the individual who has respected me in the correct manner. He is the person who respects me in the best way. He is the person who has made me the highest offering.

"Ananda, therefore, you must pay special attention to what I said. Ananda, there are four places a devoted person must see and be moved. They are the place the Buddha was born, the place where the Buddha attained Enlightenment, the place where he delivered the First Sermon, and the place where His demise took place. Any devoted person visiting these four sites will never fail to be moved."

Ven. Ananda: "How should we treat women? I would like to know this from you."

The Buddha: "It is good if you do not see them."

Ven. Ananda: "But if we happen to see them?"

The Buddha: "Even if you see them it is good to refrain from talking to them."

Ven. Ananda: "But what if we have to talk to them?"

The Buddha: "You must speak to them with great presence of mind. If you have to talk to a woman younger than you, consider her purely as your younger sister. If

you have to talk to a woman who is older than you, consider her purely as your elder sister. If you have to talk to an elderly lady, talk to her with the pure thought that she is your mother."

Ven. Ananda: "What should be the attitude we must adopt towards the Buddha's body? I would like to know this."

The Buddha: "Ananda, do not waste your time making offerings to the body of the Buddha. There are many kings, guild leaders, Brahmins, householders who are devoted to me. They will look after it."

Ven. Ananda: "How should they treat the Buddha's body?"

The Buddha: "To the Buddha's body, too, they must adopt the same attitude as to the body of a universal king."

Ven. Ananda: I would like to know how one should treat the body of a universal monarch."

The Buddha: "The body of a universal monarch should be wrapped in new silk cloths. Next, it should be wrapped in soft cotton. Once again, the body should be wrapped in new silk cloths. This way, the body should be wrapped in about five hundred silk cloths. Next, a coffin made of gold is brought. Oil is poured into it. It is then closed with a lid of gold. It is then placed in a pyre made of sandalwood. Then the cremation is done with due respect. There are four persons, Ananda, for whom *cetiyas* (pagodas) should be made for the

devotees to worship. These four persons are the Buddha, Pacceka Buddha (Private Buddha), Buddha's disciples and universal monarchs. Seeing their *cetiyas* many become serene in mind. They worship these stupas. Due to that merit they are reborn in a beneficial place after death."

Chapter Fifty–Five

Venerable Ananda wails

After that previous discussion with the Buddha Ven. Ananda slipped out quietly. He went into Mandalamala monastery and started wailing, saying, I aspired for long æons to be the chief personal attendant of a supreme Buddha. He is my elder uncle's son, eldest born on the same day as I. He allowed me all the eight requests I made.

"He is my own supreme Buddha who appointed me chief attendant in spite of the fact that great Elders like Ven. Sariputta aspired to this post. He took me along for twenty-five years as his own shadow. When a monk was required to teach the Dhamma to the ladies of the harem, He appointed me to that position, although there were many arahants. In this way He showed that He did not have even the trace of a suspicion about me. He praised my efficiency in various places.

"My own supreme Buddha, who knew me better than any other person – my supreme Buddha passes away today in His Great Demise. I am still only a stream-winner. I have not yet attained arahantship (sainthood). The supreme Buddha,

my Master who had pity on me, passes away today. I will be left all alone. When will I ever again experience such an ocean of compassion – such a symbol of loving-kindness – such a gleaming body with an aura spreading in the ten directions – such a delightful voice – such a kindly glance – a cascade of words like a stream of compassion – such an unparalleled physical presence – such a serene gait – such a presence that hypnotizes everyone? Did I not look after my supreme Buddha, sleeplessly, going round His fragrant chamber several times in the night?"

Overwhelmed by myriads of thoughts of this sort Ven. Ananda broke down and wept. As Ven. Ananda was not seen for some time, the Buddha asked the monks:

"Where is Ananda?" The monks informed Him that he was weeping. The Buddha sent a monk to fetch him. Ven. Ananda approached the Buddha in deep sorrow.

The Buddha spoke to Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, do not cry. Do not grieve. Have I not said at the beginning itself that we will have to separate from those we love? All those that come into being invariably disintegrate. They have the tendency to disappear. No one can prevent this by saying 'Let not such things happen.' Ananda, you looked after me over a long period of time, honestly, wholeheartedly, compassionately, without any wavering. You have acquired great merit in the past. Strive hard. Be diligent. Achieve sainthood quickly." The Buddha consoled Ven. Ananda.

Next, the Buddha addressed the monks: “O monks, all the Buddhas in the past also had chief attendants like Ven. Ananda. Even those Buddhas who will appear in the future, too, will have attendants like Ven. Ananda. Whenever kings, guild leaders, monks, nuns, male lay devotees, female lay devotees and others come to see me, Ven. Ananda knows the exact time to make them meet me. He knows quite well the time best suited to meet each individual.

“O monks, Ven. Ananda possesses four amazing, surprising qualities. Any group of monks coming to see me will first meet Ven. Ananda. Immediately they see Ven. Ananda they become strangely attracted to him. When Ven. Ananda talks to them, they become more and more attracted to him. If he preaches a brief sermon to them they are not happy with only a brief discourse. They like to keep on listening to him. Then Ven. Ananda becomes silent. Those monks are attracted even to his silence. They are very happy even with that.”

Ven. Ananda spoke to them: “O Venerable Buddha, do not pass away in a small city like this city of Kusinara. In India there are many great cities such as **Champā**, **Rājagaha**, **Sāvatthi**, **Sāketa**, **Kosambi** and **Benares**. In those cities there are emperors, kings, guild leaders, prime ministers who are devoted to you. They will pay last respects to your body in a grand and glorious manner.”

The Buddha replied: “Ananda, do not describe Kusinara as a minor city or a branch city. In ancient times there was a universal monarch called Maha Sudassana in this city. In those days this city was called Kusarathie. That city was twelve leagues in length, seven leagues in width. That city was as af-

fluent and populous as Alakamanda – the kingdom of gods. Ananda, please meet the Malla kings of Kusinara and inform them that the Buddha will pass away tonight. Please ask them to come quickly."

Ven. Ananda, accompanied by another monk, went to Kusinara and informed the kings of this. At that news Malla kings, queens, princes and princesses began to wail. They began wailing and weeping, clutching their heads, rolling on the ground. Weeping and wailing they rushed to the **Sāla** park and went down on their knees by the side of the Buddha. At this time a wandering ascetic, by the name of Subhadda, came to Ven. Ananda and said, "I heard that the Buddha will pass away today. I have a doubt about a certain matter. I need to get my doubt dispelled. Please allow me to see the Buddha for that purpose."

Ven. Ananda said: "The Buddha is very ill. Do not trouble Him." So saying, Ven. Ananda rejected his request. The ascetic asked him for the second time, and for the third time.

The Buddha heard this dialogue and said: "Ananda, allow Subhadda to see me."

Ven. Ananda allowed him to see the Buddha. The Buddha told Subhadda to ask any question he wished to ask. The Buddha gave appropriate answers to all the questions asked by Subhadda, and he was exceedingly pleased with the Buddha. He requested to be ordained a monk instantly. Accordingly, he was given the ordination and the higher ordination at the same time. Subhadda was the last to receive the ordination and the higher ordination from the Buddha.

The Buddha then addressed Ven. Ananda: "Ananda, it is quite likely that you may think that my Teachings, too, would pass away, when I am gone. Ananda, never think that way. Ananda, I have well preached some Dhamma to you. I have given you righteous rules of conduct. Those two – Dhamma and rules of conduct – will be your teacher after I am gone." (**Yovo Ānanda**, **dhammoca vinayoca desito paññatto so vo mamaccayena satthā**.)

"Ananda, impose **Brahmadanḍa** (non-communication) on monk Channa. What is **Brahmadanḍa**. It implies not talking to that monk – not advising that monk and segregating him – casting him away from the community."

Next, the Buddha addressed the monks: If any of you monks have a doubt about me, about my Teaching, about the brotherhood, or about the practice, ask me now. Do not repent later, saying 'We were not able to ask this when our Buddha was still alive'. If someone is reluctant to ask personally, get a friend to ask me." But not a single monk had a question to ask.

The Buddha said: "Ananda, I am quite surprised. Not even one monk has a doubt. I am very happy about this group of monks." Then He addressed the monks: "O monks, I address you now. All component things tend naturally to disintegrate. In consequence, work out your own liberation diligently. This is my last word – my last request. (**Handadāni bhikkhave āmantayāmi vo vaya dhammā saḍkhārā appamādena sampādetha**. **Ayaṃ Tathāgatassa pacchimā vācā**.)"

After this the supreme Buddha, the Teacher of the Three Worlds, the Master, the Father, the Buddha, entered into a variety of deep trances, and at the end, passed away in His Great Demise.

Chapter Fifty–Six

Venerable Ananda Attains Sainthood

The chief prelate Ven. Maha Kassapa addressed Ven. Ananda: "Ven. Ananda, we will reside at the city of Rajagaha for the rainy season. There, we will hold a council. Therefore, please retire to a forest and please make an effort to win the three remaining Paths and attain arahanthood (sainthood)."

In response to those words Ven. Ananda took his robes and his alms-bowl, and went to the Kosala country. There, he entered a forest monastery and started making an effort. On the second day itself he attained **Sakadāgāmi** (once-returner status). Hearing that he was there people went to see him. They asked him where the Buddha was, and started weeping. Ven. Ananda would preach to them and console them.

While he was going on like this a forest-dwelling deity who was friendly to Ven. Ananda, thought this way: "This monk who has come to the forest to make an effort as was requested by the Elders, spends his time consoling the people. Knowledge is presently like a heap of flowers that is not put together into garlands. Without this monk no reviewing of the Dhamma is possible."

The deity came to Ven. Ananda and said: "Venerable Sir, how can you, grieving due to the loss of the Buddha, console others?"

He said: "Ven. Ananda of the Gotama clan you have come to the forest to make an effort to achieve Nibbana. You have been meditating with Nibbana as your goal. Your only objective is Nibbana. Therefore, please meditate with that spiritual aim in mind. Be diligent. Of what use is this small-talk with lay people?

> **Rukkhamūla gahaṇaṃ pasakkiya Nibbāṇaṃ hadayasmiṃ opiya Jhāya Gotama māva pamādo Kinte bili-bilikā karissati.**

Ven. Ananda was moved by the deity's words. Since he had been physically stressed from the time the Buddha passed away, Ven. Ananda went back to the monastery and took relaxation. He had Jetavana monastery repaired. When the rainy season was nearing he went all alone to the city of Rajagaha. He started the retreat of the rainy season with the other monks selected for the Dhamma council.

King Ajatasattu completed the assembly hall for the council and informed the monks about it. Of the monks, some went about saying: "Among all these monks assembled here, there is one who goes about exuding all smells."

Ven. Ananda heard this and thought, "Among all these monks, there is no other monk exuding 'all smells', other than me. Undoubtedly, these monks mean me." He was very much saddened by this. Some monks told him: "Ven. Ananda, the council meeting for the reviewing of Dhamma will start tomorrow.

You must make an effort to win the remaining Paths to sainthood. You are not qualified to attend the council meeting. Do be diligent."

Ven. Ananda thought this way: "The Dhamma council meeting will be tomorrow. I am still a learner. Therefore, I am not fit to attend the meeting with those learned monks." With resolution and determination he practised insight meditation. He spent a good part of the night mindful of the body. But he was not able to achieve any special spiritual attainment. He thought this way: "The Blessed One said this to me: 'Ananda, you are a person who has acquired much merit. Attending to a Buddha like me is not at all a futile effort. Make an effort and become a blemishless one (a saint).' There is no falsehood in the Words of the Buddha. I have made a highly strenuous effort. This has strained my mind. Therefore, I will strive without going to extremes."

He was not able to make the modest effort in the ambulatory. Deciding to give the body a rest he washed his feet, and entered the monastery. Thinking that he would rest a while on the bed, he brought his body to the bed. Then his feet rose free of the floor. His head did not reach the pillow. At this moment, his mind became free of such blemishes as passion and craving. In other words, he destroyed all the defilements and became an arahant.

Thus, Ven. Ananda became a full-fledged arahant. The arahantship attained by Ven. Ananda was free of all four postures. (If the question is asked, 'Who attained arahanthood in this dispensation, without lying down, without sitting down, without standing, without moving, it is fit to answer "Ven.

Ananda.") On the second day after he attained arahanthood without being in any of the four postures – or in other words, three months and four days after the Buddha passed away, the monks conducting the council procedures assembled in the council hall, after their meals.

At that stage Ven. Ananda happily decided that it was high time he went to the assembly Hall. He robed himself and, like a fruit that has detached from the stem, or like a gem in a casket, or like the moon that has emerged from the clouds, or like a lotus that has awakened in the rays of the morning sun, appeared through miraculous powers in the seat reserved for him, as if informing the assembly that he had attained arahantship, and as if displaying to them that the advice given to him to be diligent had borne fruit. Ven. Maha Kassapa, seeing this, thought: "Ven. Ananda, who has attained arahanthood, is quite appealing. If the Buddha lived today He would have appreciated this achievement with '**Sādhu**!' (Well done!) Since the Buddha is not around today, I will say '**Sādhu**!' myself." So thinking, he said "**Sādhu**!" three times, according to the scriptures. According to some others Ven. Ananda was keen to announce his attainment of sainthood. Therefore, he did not enter the assembly hall with the other monks. When the other monks occupied the seats reserved for them, the seat reserved for Ven. Ananda became vacant. Monks, seeing this, asked for whom was the seat reserved. They said: "For Ven. Ananda." They then asked: "Where has he gone?" Ven. Ananda then decided it was high time he went there, and appeared there through his psychic power, diving through the floor, and sat down in the seat reserved for him. But, whatever that may be, if some monks said "One monk here exudes

worldly smell," Ven. Ananda made him feel ashamed by entering Saptaparni cave, where the assembly was held.

At this stage a great blemishless Brahma from **Suddhāvāsa** (Pure Land) said the following, to show that Ven. Ananda was now a blemishless arahant: "If someone possesses the Teachings of the Buddha, who is a kinsman of the sun, it is this treasurer of Dhamma who is born in the Gotama clan. He has achieved Nibbana in his life. He is, therefore, on his way to the attainment of total Nibbana."

> **Yasmiṃ patiṭṭhitā dhammā Buddhassādicca bandhu no Nibbāḍa gamane magge – So yaṃ tiṭṭhati Gotamo**

"Ven. Ananda, who protects the jewel of Dhamma of the versatile, virtuous great sage, has attained the totally blemishless state."

> **Bahussuto dhammadharo Kosārakkho mahesino cakkhu sabbassa lokassa Ānando parinibbauto**

Chapter Fifty–Seven

Venerable Ananda And Venerable Maha Kassapa

Bhikkhunis liked Ven. Ananda better than Ven. Maha Kassapa. But Ven. Ananda had a high regard for Ven. Maha Kassapa. It was the kind of regard one has for one's teacher. One day, a novice monk wanted to obtain higher ordination

from Ven. Maha Kassapa. On this occasion Ven. Maha Kassapa sent word to Ven. Ananda to read the conferring formulæ (**Kamma Vācā**) at the higher ordination. Ven. Ananda refused the invitation because he did not want to pronounce Ven. Maha Kassapa's name. He sent word saying that he could not read the conferring formulæ because he could not refer to Ven. Maha Kassapa by name, as he was his teacher.

"(**Nāham ussahāmi therassa nāmaṃ gahetuṃ garu me thero' ti**)." "I cannot speak the name of Ven. Maha Kassapa because he is my teacher."

Chapter Fifty–Eight

Elders Blame Venerable Ananda

Those Elders who assembled for the First Council to review the Dhamma and the Rules of Discipline, found fault with Ven. Ananda for five reasons. (The Tibetan Book of Discipline states that Ven. Ananda was found fault with by Ven. Maha Kassapa Thero, and that was before Ven. Ananda attained arahanthood – sainthood.)

1. Ananda, you did not enquire from the Buddha as to what were the rules of little importance that He permitted us to change when necessary. In consequence, we had to review all rules of discipline. This is your fault. You must admit this. Ven. Ananda said this in reply: "I was deeply

distressed by the Demise of the Buddha. In consequence, I could not refer these matters to the Buddha. Thus, I cannot see there was any fault on my part. But submitting to your wish, and honouring your word, I will confess my omission."

2. Ananda you stitched the Buddha's outer robe while trampling upon it. This is a fault on your part. Therefore, please confess this. Ven. Ananda said this in reply: "I never trampled upon it in disrespect. I did not have anyone to help me when I stitched it. That is why I had to resort to it. Thus, I cannot consider it a fault at all. But, in due respect to you venerables, I will confess that fault."

3. Ananda, you got females to worship the Buddha's dead body first. The tears they dropped sullied the Buddha's dead body. This is your fault. Therefore, the Elders asked him to confess that fault. Ven. Ananda replied: "I did that because they wanted to go home without delay. I wanted to send them back home before it became late. (When the Buddha passed away a vast mass of people gathered together. These crowds were segregated and the women were first shown the Buddha's body.) I cannot see any fault in this. But, in due respect to your words, I will confess this fault."

4. Ananda, the Buddha informed you in several places such as Chapala stupa that He had decided to pass away. But you never requested the Buddha to live for a hundred years, for the well-being of the people. This is your fault. You must confess that this is your fault. Ven. Ananda replied: "At those times, perhaps Mara (Death) had possessed me. That is why I was not able to request the

Buddha to live for a hundred years. Therefore, I do not see this as my fault. But, I will still confess this as my fault."

5. Ananda, you encouraged women to become ordained in the Buddha's sasana. This is an error. You must confess this. Replied Ven. Ananda: "When the Buddha's mother passed away, Maha Prajapati Gotami breast-fed him without giving her milk to her own son Prince Nanda. I did this as an honour and a mark of gratitude to the Buddha's wet-nurse, Maha Prajapati Gotami. Therefore, I do not consider this a fault at all. But, I will confess this, as you ask me to do this."

Chapter Fifty–Nine

Venerable Ananda And Venerable Sariputta

There existed a very strange intimacy between Ven. Ananda and Ven. Sariputta. Whenever he received any delicacies, Ven. Ananda would offer them and share them with Ven. Sariputta. Ven. Ananda would ordain the children of his devotees and would give them higher ordination with Ven. Sariputta as the teacher and the preceptor. (Ven. Sariputta, too, would adopt the same attitude towards Ven. Ananda.)

(**Paṇitānī labhitvā therassa deti**. **Attano upaṭṭhāka dārake pabbājetvā**, **therassa santike upajjhaṃ gaḍhāpeti**. **Upasampādeti. Sāriputta thero'pi Ānanda therassa tatheva karoti**.)

Such an intimate friendship between these two monks existed solely because of mutual respect for their moral and virtuous integrity. One day, the Buddha addressed Ven. Ananda thus: "Ananda, do you like Ven. Sariputta? Do you appreciate him?"

Replied Ven. Ananda: "Venerable Sir, anyone who has not gone astray, anyone who is not wicked, anyone who is not foolish, anyone whose brain has not gone wrong, will invariably like Ven. Sariputta. If there is someone who does not like Ven. Sariputta, he must be an ignorant person. Such a person must be a villain – a person whose brain is crooked. Venerable Sir, Ven. Sariputta is an erudite person (**Paṇḍito bhanto Sāriputto**). He is a great genius (**Mahā pañño**). He is knowledgeable in many subjects (**puthu pañño**). He is a wise one with a sense of humour (**hāsu pañño**). He has the ability to grasp anything with alacrity (**javana pañño**). His wit is sharp (**tikkha pañño**). His mind is analytical (**nibbedhika pañño**). He is content with the least (**appiccho**). He remains full of joy always (**santuṭṭho**). He does not usually move in crowds (**asaṃsaṭṭho**). He lives with a deep sense of solitude (**pavivitto**). He is such a resolute person that he has not lain on his back in bed for forty-four years (**āraddha viriyo**). Whenever advice is due, he gives it (**vattā**). He accepts advice given by others with due respect (**vacanakhamo**). Whenever he sees the fault of a monk he advises him, accusing him about it (**codako**). He wishes that he may not have to see or talk to evil persons (**pāpa garahi**)."

Ven. Ananda said that these sixteen virtues were found in Ven. Sariputta. The Buddha Himself said: "Ananda, Ven.

Sāriputta is versatile (**pandito Ānanda Sāriputto**)." This way, the Buddha approved the sixteen virtues of Ven. **Sāriputta** and placed the Enlightened One's sacred seal of approval on what Ven. Ananda said, making those sixteen virtues part of the Buddha's Word.

Chapter Sixty

The Demise Of Venerable Ananda

When Ven. Ananda was past 120, he examined the extent of his life-span. He discovered that his allotted life-span was over. He announced that seven days hence, he would pass away. Hearing this, people on the two banks of the River Rohini were quite moved. They began to lament and wail.

People on one bank requested Ven. Ananda to pass away on their bank, saying that they attended upon Ven. Ananda all this time. The people on the other bank, too, started wailing and lamenting, saying that they looked after Ven. Ananda all this time. They said that Ven. Ananda should pass away on their bank, close to them.

Ven. Ananda Maha Thero heard all this. He spoke thus: "People of both banks were helpful to me. I cannot just say that they helped and those others did not help. In such a context if I passed away either on this bank or the other bank, people on both banks will start a row over my bodily relics. If a row were to start, it will be entirely because of me. If the

row is quelled it will also be because of me. Therefore, let those on the other bank assemble on their bank. Let those on this bank assemble on this bank."

On the seventh day he rose into the sky above the centre of the river and, at a height of about seven fathoms, he sat in the air with his legs crossed. From that position he preached a sermon to the masses. He made a firm determination that one half of his bodily relics should fall onto one bank, and the other half should fall onto the other bank. Seated that way he entered into the five-trance.

Immediately he passed away a fire arose from his body consuming the flesh, skin and sinews. The bodily relics remained. These relics went through the air like white flowers and, as if exactly measured, half of them fell on this bank and the other half on the other bank.

Many people broke down and wept. The earth nearly split. There was even more lamentation than on the day the Buddha passed away in the Great Demise. The people mourned for four months, saying: "If Ven. Ananda survived though the Buddha passed away, it would have seemed as if the Buddha were still living. It is only today that the Buddha passed away."

Chapter Sixty–One

Venerable Ananda's Past Birth

Buddha Padumuttara visited the city of Hansawathie with His disciples to be of benefit to His father the king. He resided in that city. Throughout their stay in the city the king (the father) looked after the four-fold requirements of the brotherhood led by the Buddha.

Prince Sumana, son of the Buddha's step-mother, was the sub-king in a place far away from the city. At that time a distant province of the king was being roused against him by some secret enemies. Prince Sumana informed his father, the king, of this.

The king requested prince Sumana to quell the uprising. The prince went there, and quelled the uprising. Pleased at this, the king asked Prince Sumana to make any request he wished to make. The prince asked for permission to look after the Buddha for three months, providing Him with the four requisites. The king said he could not allow that request, and that the prince should ask another. The prince said that was the only thing he wished. The king requested the prince to ask the Buddha about it.

Prince Sumana went to the monastery to see the Buddha. When he visited the monastery the Buddha was in the fragrant chamber. Prince Sumana met the monks in the monastery, and told them that he came to see the Buddha.

The monks informed him that one could not see the Buddha just as one wished, and that Buddha Padumuttara could be seen only through a monk named Sumana.

Prince Sumana saw Monk Sumana, and informed him that he had come to meet the Buddha. Monk Sumana took a chair from the Buddha's fragrant chamber and disappeared. Next, he appeared with it outside the fragrant chamber, and prepared the seat for the Buddha. Seeing this miracle Prince Sumana thought, "Monk Sumana is a great monk."

The Buddha sat on the seat prepared for Him. Prince Sumana worshipped the Buddha and asked Him about Monk Sumana. The Buddha explained that Monk Sumana was the Buddha's chief attendant, and described the various meritorious acts he performed to attain that status. Prince Sumana informed the Buddha that he, too, would like to be the chief attendant of a future Buddha.

Prince Sumana performed many such meritorious acts as offering alms to monks led by the Buddha. Buddha Padumutara addressed Prince Sumana thus: In the one hundred thousandth æon from now, you will be the chief attendant of Buddha Gotama." This way, he was given confirmation.

Later on he performed many meritorious acts during the Dispensations of Buddha Vipassi and Buddha Kassapa. He was reborn in human form and as a deity many-a-time. In the days of the Buddha he was born as the son of Sakya King Amitodhana, brother of great king Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu.

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